

The Kingmaker, by Nev Fountain

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[Part One]

RICHARD (actor): When have I injured thee, dear Elizabeth? When have I done thee wrong? His Royal Grace cannot be scarce a breathing-while you trouble him with lewd complaints.
(Crowd jeers.)

MAN: If she wants to say anything lewd to me, I won't complain.

ELIZABETH (actor): Brother of Gloucester, you mistake the matter. The King, of his own Royal disposition, is aimed at your interior hatred, that in your outward action shows itself against my children, brothers, and myself.

CROWD: Aw.

MAN: Here, I'll look after you, darling.

ELIZABETH (actor): Makes him to send, that he may learn the ground.

RICHARD (actor): I cannot tell. The world is grown so bad.

(Raspberries blown, laughter.)

RICHARD (actor): Look, will you lot just allow me to finish? Right, that's it. Come on, if you want something. You in the third row, I saw you do the raspberry. Come on, I'll have the lot of you.

MAN: Ah, look. Richard the Third's got the hump!

(Laughter.)

ERIMEM: Peri?

PERI: Yes?

ERIMEM: I have a question about this play.

PERI: Yes?

ERIMEM: Which side do we wish to win, the actors or the audience?

PERI: Well, with actors like these, I'm rooting for the audience every time.

ERIMEM: You see that actor there, the man dressed as Elizabeth? He plays the part of a queen, yet he's a man.

PERI: That's quite common in British theatre, believe me.

ERIMEM: But why? He looks very silly. Why not a woman to play a woman's role?

PERI: It's the time we're in. It wasn't seen as proper for a woman to provide low entertainment.

ERIMEM: That is odd. In my time it is always the women who provide most of the entertainment.

PERI: Yeah, and I think I can guess what kind of entertainment you're talking about. It's just the custom of the time. Theatre was seen to be beneath a woman, as were most fun things.

ERIMEM: Well, if it is the custom of the age, so be it. It is good to observe such customs.

PERI: We'd do better to observe those guys near the stage. They're holding rotten fruit.

ERIMEM: Er, Peri, is it a custom of this age for a man to place a hand on your bottom as a form of greeting?

PERI: Not really, no.

(Crack! Man cries out.)

PERI: Erimem! Did you just break that guy's arm?

ERIMEM: Yes.

PERI: That's, that's... Well, I'm shocked, that's all.

ERIMEM: I know what you mean. Were I back in my own palace, I would have servants to administer the punishment for placing a hand on my royal behind. But as I am without my entourage, I have to do it myself.

PERI: I notice you left him the other arm.

ERIMEM: Everyone has the right to make two mistakes. I left him one should he wish to try again.

PERI: Why, you little flirt.

(Cheers from crowd.)

ERIMEM: Oh, I don't think they're going to finish the play.

PERI: Well, you haven't missed much. He kills just about everyone on his bloody rise to power, Henry Tudor arrives to stake his flimsy claim to the throne of England, and then he's hacked to pieces on Bosworth Field. The end.

MAN: Oi, watch it, girl. Spoilers.

PERI: What?

MAN: Did you hear what she said? She said that bloke dies at the end.

WOMAN: There's always one, ain't there?

PERI: I'm sorry. I thought everyone knew what happened.

WOMAN: What this one? It's just out. He's just had the previews. The fruit's barely dry on the theatre critics yet.

MAN: Course, there's always some clever-clogs big mouth flapping away.

WOMAN: Let's get some rotten fruit and give them a pelting.

CROWD: Yeah!

MAN: Oh, they've gone.

WOMAN: The nerve of some people, ruining our cultural day out.

MAN: I know. Oh, come on, let's go and have a pint down at the old White Rabbit.

DOCTOR: How can a man capable of such profound insights, such a knack with words, such talent at describing the human condition with just a few strokes of the pen, be such an utter nincompoop! Of all the hypocritical, trough-headed myopic buffoons, he really has to take the biscuit. Dramatic licence, huh. Now see what he's made you do, Doctor. He's got you so annoyed he's got you talking to yourself again. You said you'd never do that again, didn't you? Well, you started it. No I didn't. Well, one of us must have and it certainly wasn't me! Oh no, here it comes.

(Big wibble.)

DOCTOR: Hello, old chap. I've been expecting you.

ROBOT: Doctor Who, you have transgressed your deadline.

DOCTOR: Have I?

ROBOT: Your contract has been violated.

DOCTOR: Has it?

ROBOT: There must be no contract violation. I am contractually obliged to revoke your existence. You must submit a further transcript or suffer the consequences. We require a draft at once. (suddenly slows and stops)

DOCTOR: Now that's just what I thought you'd say.

ERIMEM: So this is the country of England the Doctor loves so much.

PERI: Yep, this is it, in all its muddy glory.

ERIMEM: I don't see much to love. I liked France better. The clothes and the food were much nicer.

PERI: Won't get any arguments from me. Beats me why he keeps coming here. Does get better, though. In four hundred years time they get the Beatles and fashion sense. Just look at this theatre programme. It's hardly worth the paper it's written on. Most of it's adverts for shops and ha, I knew it. (reads) The characters depicted in this play are fictitious. Any similarity to actual persons living or dead is completely coincidental.

ERIMEM: Is that not really how it happened, then? The death of the princes? He didn't murder them?

PERI: I'm sure the Doctor will have a few words to say about that. Remember him saying he was going to find Shakespeare and give him a piece of his mind? What bloody murder in his heart. It's one of the biggest historical mysteries of all time. Did he kill them? Was he innocent? If he did, why did he do it? Now me, I think Richard was pregnant.

ERIMEM: Pregnant?

PERI: Sure. The guy has this complex about being unattractive, has these violent mood-swings, murders everyone in sight, gets weird nightmares and has a strange craving for horse at four o'clock in the morning? Take it from me, the evidence is overwhelming.

(Erimem laughs as they enter the Tardis.)

PERI: Hey, Doctor.

DOCTOR: Hello, you two. Did you have a nice time?

(Tardis door closes.)

PERI: Yeah. I particularly liked the bit where Richard the Third loses his temper, throws his hump into the wings and power-dives on the groundlings, and Erimem breaks a man's arm for fondling her bottom.

DOCTOR: Yes, those are my favourite bits too.

ERIMEM: Doctor, what is that large, shiny man doing in the Tardis?

DOCTOR: What shiny man?

PERI: I think she's referring to the nine foot robot with glowing eyes standing in the corner.

DOCTOR: Oh, what, this chap? It's a publisher's robot from the 64th century. It's come to chat about a missed deadline.

PERI: He's come to chat about a missed deadline? With laser cannons?

DOCTOR: Have you ever tried getting a writer to keep a deadline? I would say laser cannons were the minimum requirement.

PERI: So what's he doing here?

DOCTOR: Well, it's fascinating, actually. This robot comes from a point in the distant future when every small publisher in the universe gets bought up or taken over until there is one all-powerful monolithic company at the end of Time. Now, this publishing house owns all the authors throughout history, and that of course includes the lazy ones who've been paid advances and never bothered to finish their books. About 90% of them, at a guess. Hence the robot. Time travel enables them to search through recorded history for all the lazy writers and remind them that they have manuscripts to finish.

PERI: And the laser guns are there to help those authors jog their memories?

DOCTOR: Exactly.

ERIMEM: You still haven't told us what it's doing here, Doctor.

DOCTOR: Oh, right, of course. There was a point during my stay on 20th century Earth that I discovered that UNIT wasn't the most security conscious top secret agency there's ever been. The press got wind of my role in protecting the Earth from alien invasions. It may have been the Loch Ness monster swimming up the Thames and attacking the World Energy Conference that did it.

PERI: Yeah. I think that probably would have.

DOCTOR: So, I became a reluctant celebrity for a while, and I managed to avoid the chat show circuit, although I did play the odd cricket match for the Lords Taverners. Anyway, this publisher approached me and asked if I wanted to write some factual books. I thought I'd dash off a few thought-provoking tomes, give the Earth the benefit of my unique insights.

PERI: What were these thought-provoking tomes called?

DOCTOR: I don't seem to remember. I think it was something ground-breaking and profound. A treatise on the human condition from an outsider's viewpoint. How Green was my Gallifrey, the Female UNIT. Something like that.

ROBOT: Contract has been made. Doctor Who, your contract is incomplete. Only five books have been completed in the Doctor Who Discovers series. These are Doctor Who Discovers Prehistoric Monsters, Doctor Who Discovers Space, Doctor Who Discovers Strange and Mysterious Creatures, Doctor Who Discovers the Conquerors.

DOCTOR: Oh dear. I thought he'd gone.

PERI: Did he just say Doctor Who Discovers Prehistoric Monsters?

DOCTOR: I never said the books were for adults, did I?

PERI: I was kinda being incredulous about the Doctor Who part.

DOCTOR: Oh. I see. The publishers originally called the series The Doctor, comma, Who Discovers Prehistoric Monsters, but then some idiot in their design department didn't spot the The and created a logo that said Doctor Who, and it, well, stuck.

PERI: Doctor Who? Well, I like it. Certainly gives you an air of mystery.

DOCTOR: Yes, thank you, Perpugilliam.

PERI: So, I take it you never actually finished one of these books? Don't tell me. Doctor Who Discovers Finger Painting.

DOCTOR: Doctor Who Discovers Historical Mysteries, actually, and if you must know I insisted on writing educational books for children.

PERI: Insisted? So it was a choice between children and adult fiction?

DOCTOR: Well...

PERI: Doctor?

DOCTOR: All right. It was either that or the novelty cookbook.

PERI: Ah. Now we get the truth. Your story keeps changing, Doctor, but the ending stays the same. The fact remains you wrote a kid's book.

DOCTOR: Do you know, that's very interesting.

PERI: What is?

DOCTOR: What you just said. That is, in point of fact, the motto of the Celestial Intervention Agency.

PERI: Really?

DOCTOR: Yes. The story changes, the ending remains the same. It means, in their rather cut-throat and devious way, that it doesn't matter how you fix temporal anomalies as long as Time continues more or less along its own sweet path.

PERI: We've no idea what you're talking about, Doctor.

DOCTOR: To give a specific example. If a man who decides to wage a war is erased from the timeline, and if you can't get him back, do the next best thing. Forget him, wage the war yourself, and keep Time going on roughly the right lines. Terribly irresponsible, if you ask me. History is like a sleeping giant. Best observed, never tampered with.

ERIMEM: Ah, and this is why we are here. To observe. You are writing this book about historical mysteries. Of course, Richard the Third and the Princes in the Tower! And we are here for research.

DOCTOR: Top of the class. I've actually found the recorded notes I made the last time I tried to write the dratted thing. Look.

(Jon Culshaw doing his Tom Baker.)

DOCTOR 4: The reign of Richard the Third really began on the ninth of April 1483. Edward the Fourth, King of England, brother of Richard and father of two young princes caught a chill and died suddenly. England had known peace for twelve years, but now that peace looked under threat. The new King barely a teenager, the Queen's own family, the almighty Woodvilles, were manoeuvring to keep the young King under their control.

PERI: Doesn't sound much like you.

DOCTOR: Ah. Well, when you record yourself on tape, it never does sound like your own voice, does it?

PERI: Yes, but even so.

DOCTOR 4: Richard had been nominated sole protector of the young King, but that power had been partially

revoked by the King's Council put in place dominated by the Woodvilles and their allies. The Queen's brother, Earl Rivers, was sent to bring the young King back to London under close escort, and with Woodville's soldiers at his back. Naturally, Richard being the practical soldier that he was, decided to act.

STAFFORD: There he is, my Lord. One future king plus several escorts on the road ahead.

RICHARD: Good. Now just act natural, Bucko. You let me do the talking.

(A northern accent, a bit 9th Doctor like.)

STAFFORD: Sire.

RICHARD: They're separated from their troops now. If we can just keep them here till our own men arrive tonight, we've got 'em. They've got pike men and foot soldiers.

STAFFORD: I wonder what their small arms are like?

RICHARD: Wha?

STAFFORD: What?

RICHARD: What did you say?

STAFFORD: I was just wondering about their weaponry.

RICHARD: That's not what you said. You said I wonder what their small arms are like. That's very good. Very funny.

STAFFORD: My Lord?

RICHARD: The old 'have a go at the bloke with the withered arm' joke. Never let it be said I haven't got a sense of humour. Ho, ho.

STAFFORD: My Lord, I wasn't making a joke about your arm.

RICHARD: No, it's fine. Don't mind me. It's not as if I haven't heard them all before. Don't mind Richard, he's 'armless. Someone give Ricky a hand, he looks like he needs a new one. Let's give a big hand for the Duke. Et cetera, et flaming cetera.

STAFFORD: My Lord! The very idea I would make sport about your physical prowess. The Lord strike me down if I even contemplate such a thing.

RICHARD: Mmm.

STAFFORD: Why, you are worth ten of any man I know. Such thoughtless insults would only demean me.

RICHARD: All right, I believe you. Thousands wouldn't.

STAFFORD: On my life, Sire. I wouldn't stoop to making any comments about your appearance.

RICHARD: Oh, it's my stoop now. You're having a go at my bloody stoop.

STAFFORD: No, I wasn't.

RICHARD: I see. It's 'have a chuckle at the old Duke of Gloucester's expense day' is it? Ha bloody ha. Oh, my sides. Look, my head's fallen off from laughing.

STAFFORD: But my Lord, I really wasn't.

RICHARD: Oops, here we go. They're here. We'll talk about this later. Greetings, Earl Rivers. I greet you in the name of the new King.

RIVERS: And greetings to you, Lords Gloucester and Buckingham. Well, what can I say? This is a most lovely surprise.

RICHARD: Yes, isn't it.

RIVERS: I mean, fancy meeting you here. I am escorting the young Prince to be crowned, and his uncle, who I thought was in Scotland, pops up here of all places. Fancy that.

RICHARD: Yes, it is a bit of a turn-up, isn't it. You see, I was having a bit of an early morning gallop with me old mate Bucko here, and suddenly I turned to him and said, haven't we galloped all the way to Buckinghamshire? Didn't I, Bucko.

STAFFORD: That's right. And I turned back and said, yes.

RICHARD: We clocked up all those miles and I hadn't even realised. Dunno what came over me. Grief at the loss of my beloved brother, I expect.

STAFFORD: Hang on a minute, Sire. Now we're here...

RICHARD: What is it, Buckingham?

STAFFORD: I've had a thought. Wouldn't it be a good idea if you extend your services as Royal Protector, and escort his Royal Highness back to London?

RICHARD: Do you know, Bucko, that's a very good idea. Why didn't I think of that?

STAFFORD: Grief, sir?

RICHARD: Yes. It must be the grief. Of course.

RIVERS: Well, that's jolly nice of you. Jolly nice. But as you can see, I have already extended my services as the young Prince's governor to escort him to London myself, so there really is no need. We would not want to put you to any kind of trouble.

RICHARD: It's no trouble at all.

RIVERS: I think it might be.

RICHARD: Try me.

RIVERS: The Prince's heart will surely fill with joy at the news that he has such loyal subjects in abundance. But I must insist I conduct my duty as ratified by the King Mother. Such is the mad world we live in, it may

even be considered treason to interfere with said governor's constitutional duties, even if their personage is the Protector himself. Absurd, isn't it?

RICHARD: Ha, ha. Absurd indeed. And equally absurd would be the charge of treason levelled at anyone who keeps the Prince from his lawful protector, even if they be the young Prince's own governor. What an odd world we live in. Ha, ha, ha.

RIVERS: What an odd world indeed. I suppose only time itself will tell who is the loyal subject and who is the treasonous one.

RICHARD: Ah, indeed, you speak wise words. My thoughts make a banquet of your reasoning and leave me with much to digest. Why don't we reach a compromise and stay at yonder inn? Then at first light we will both accompany the young Prince and help him meet his destiny.

RIVERS: Well, I suppose it wouldn't do any harm.

RICHARD: Good, then. It's settled. Let this be a start of a new age of harmony and grace that will spread across our fair kingdom.

RIVERS: (receding) Indeed. After all, that is what we all want.

RICHARD: Annoying little sod. Do you want to kill him or shall I?

STAFFORD: Ha. Stupid old fool. I've got a hunch he won't be giving us any trouble.

RICHARD: A hunch? Oh, very funny. You are so funny. You're this close to feeling the back of my good hand, Bucko, you know that.

ERIMEM: So, did you find Mister Shakespeare and give him a piece of your mind?

DOCTOR: Oh, in no uncertain terms. When I'd finished with him, he didn't know whether he was coming or going.

PERI: There's a note on the console. (reads) Thankf for the ale, Doctor. You fure can confume the stuff like a ftallion. Pity you talked fuch utter nonsense. We muft do it again fome time. Yourf fincerely, Will fhakespeare. So, he didn't know whether he was coming or going. Sounds like he wasn't the only one.

(note – the long s of olden times – now unused – looks like an f without the cross bar. But it is an S, and should be pronounced as such and not an F like Peri did.)

DOCTOR: Yes, we did quaff a few ales together. Purely in order to gain his confidence, you understand. I was picking his brains about Richard the Third. I foolishly assumed he might have done the slightest bit of historical research, but no, just that nonsense written by Thomas More. The man is an absolute hack. A fiction-peddling puppet to the House of Tudor, and a lap-dog to the court of Queen Elizabeth. I told him straight. Billy, I said, Billy, people are already questioning what motives Richard could possibly have had for killing the Princes. Suspicion is already turning to your precious Queen's grandfather, Henry Tudor. In 400 years time your play will be shown for what it is, nothing but tawdry propaganda.

ERIMEM: And what did he say to that?

DOCTOR: I can't remember. I think I might have fallen over at that point.

PERI: I'm sure he was mortified that his legacy would last for a mere 400 years.

DOCTOR: You'll be surprised. Writers are notoriously egotistical. Well, he wasn't much help. There's nothing else for it. We'll have to head back to 1485 and try and find out first hand.

PERI: I'm surprised you didn't do that in the first place.

DOCTOR: Well, it's not the most stable time in history, and I wondered if it would do any good. We'd probably never get access to the Tower, all we'd probably hear is London gossip and tittle-tattle.

PERI: And hearing gossip and tittle-tattle is a reason *not* to go somewhere? You really are from another planet, Doctor Who.

(Owls hooting.)

RICHARD: How is our royal Highness?

STAFFORD: Safely tucked up in bed.

RICHARD: Good. And friend Rivers?

STAFFORD: Still alive, unfortunately. Our troops have arrived and are waiting for the word. When shall we move on him?

RICHARD: I think dawn is the traditional time, isn't it?

STAFFORD: I thought it was midnight.

RICHARD: No, Bucko. Midnight's for assassinations. Dawn is for betrayal, noon is for executions, dusk is for flight, and late morning is for bloody battle.

STAFFORD: What's the afternoon for?

RICHARD: Lunch.

(The Tardis materialises nearby.)

RICHARD: You hear something?

STAFFORD: What?

RICHARD: There was a noise.

STAFFORD: What kind of noise?

RICHARD: Horrible. Sounded like a dying horse. It came from the forest over there.

STAFFORD: It could be a force sent by the Woodvilles to surprise us. I'll go and look.

DOCTOR: Here we are, London 1485. Have I got everything? Notes, tape recorder, disposable camera.

PERI: So, what happens if you don't write this book?

DOCTOR: Oh, I expect we'll get more visits from publisher's robots, each one bigger and with more weaponry than the last, until I get the message.

ERIMEM: So we don't have much choice, then.

DOCTOR: Not really, but look, it'll be fun to do anyway. We can finally find out the mystery of what happened to the Princes. Round up the usual suspects who have been floated over the years - King Richard, Duke of Buckingham, James Tyrell, Henry Tudor - and find out who actually did the dirty deed.

ERIMEM: I must admit I am quite curious to find out if Richard was a murderer or just a wronged man.

DOCTOR: That's the spirit. I love murder mystery weekends, don't you?

(Tardis door opens.)

DOCTOR: Right, off we go.

PERI: You're not going out like that, are you?

DOCTOR: Whyever not?

PERI: Well, you're hardly dressed for the 15th century.

DOCTOR: Peri, you should know by now that I have a knack for making myself inconspicuous. Come on, where's your spirit of discover? Are you two coming or not?

ERIMEM: I think we'll rely on the Tardis wardrobe to make us inconspicuous, Doctor.

DOCTOR: Please yourselves.

(Internal door closes.)

DOCTOR: Right, it's about half past 1485. I'm heading for a little tavern on Fleet Street called the Kingmaker to do a little detective work. Someone once told me it can be a useful place to find out all sorts of stuff. You can't miss it. Just head for St Paul's Cathedral. The old Norman one, not the with the dome. That's not there yet. I'll meet you there in three hours time? And don't be late.

(Tardis door closes. Internal door opens.)

PERI: He's very excitable, isn't he?

ERIMEM: I think he's still tipsy from all that ale he had with Shakespeare. You look nice, by the way. Not sure I like this wool stuff. It's all scratchy.

(Ding sound.)

ERIMEM: Did you hear that?

PERI: I certainly did. That was weird.

ERIMEM: Like the Tardis landed. Again.

PERI: It's probably nothing.

ERIMEM: Do you think so?

PERI: Yeah. Don't worry. The Tardis is old. It's like most old people, always making noises when you least expect it..

ERIMEM: Yes, you're right. You must be. Come on. Let's catch up with him.

(Tardis door opens and closes, owls hooting.)

PERI: This doesn't look like London.

ERIMEM: No. But we have gone back in time a hundred years. Perhaps this area of London was woodland then?

PERI: Doesn't sound like London either. But I think the most likely explanation is, it's gone wrong. Again.

Doctor? Doctor? Typical. He's gone. Again.

ERIMEM: Look, down there. There's someone under those trees.

PERI: Who is it? Is it the Doctor?

ERIMEM: Oh no. Peri, I think it's a body.

STAFFORD: Halt. Stay where you are. Put that thingummyjig on the floor.

SEYTON: If you insist.

STAFFORD: Now, step away from that thing, whatever it is.

SEYTON: Thing? Thing? For your information, sir, this is my travelling machine. My magic cabinet that takes me to places beyond your imagination.

STAFFORD: So you're a demon, are you?

SEYTON: Ah, that depends. Do they burn individuals who show signs of devilry in this century?

STAFFORD: Yes.

SEYTON: Well, in that case, I am a wise and benevolent sorcerer.

STAFFORD: Very wise. And what brings you here to this realm of mortals, sorcerer?

SEYTON: I come from the future, sir, to give counsel to Richard of Gloucester!

(Gulp, gulp, satisfied sigh.)

RICHARD: Do you believe him?

STAFFORD: Well, he did come out of this thing, sire, the like of which I have never seen before. And they do say that unusual portents crop up at the time of a coronation.

RICHARD: Who says?

STAFFORD: Well, *they* do. The ones who do say. You know, they, who do say.

RICHARD: Well, as long as we're being specific.

STAFFORD: And he had this. Biggins was fiddling about with it outside just now. The end lit up and half the privy vanished, along with most of Biggins' head.

RICHARD: Oh well, Biggins never used either of them. Where is this time-travelling soothsayer now?

STAFFORD: He's outside under guard.

RICHARD: Well, let's have a look at him, then. Perhaps I'll let you cut his throat from behind, just to see if he sees it coming. Heh, heh, heh, heh.

(Tavern door creaks open and closed.)

RICHARD: So, man from the future, or whatever you like to call yourself.

SEYTON: I am Seyton. Mister Seyton.

RICHARD: Not the Doctor, then.

SEYTON: The Doctor?

RICHARD: Of course not. You're Mister Seyton. You just said.

SEYTON: You know the Doctor?

RICHARD: Oh no. Sorry, my mistake. Don't mind me.

SEYTON: But you just said the Doctor.

RICHARD: Yeah. Doctor John Morton, Bishop of Ely.

SEYTON: Ah.

RICHARD: I had hoped he would come here so we can renegotiate my duties as Lord Protector.

SEYTON: Oh, good.

RICHARD: Well, anyway, you're not him. So, Mister Seyton, what secrets from events to come are you here to divulge to us?

SEYTON: Ahem.

RICHARD: They developed a cure for coughing. Well, that's progress.

SEYTON: No, no. What I mean, my Lord, is that what I have to say is for your ears, and your ears alone.

RICHARD: Oh, right. Bucko, can you give us a minute?

STAFFORD: But sir, I can't do that.

RICHARD: He seems harmless. And if he's not, I'll trust you to avenge my death in a suitably lurid manner.

STAFFORD: If he so much as upsets your digestion, me and the lads will break out the red hot pokers before your second belch, sir.

RICHARD: Sheesh, you guys. (door opens and closes) So, this better be good.

SEYTON: Hail, Richard, Constable of the North. Hail, Richard, Duke of Gloucester. Hail, Richard, who would be King hereafter.

RICHARD: I see. So I'm to be King, am I? Hope you're not going to think a bit of flowery nonsense, three hails and a bit of hereafter are going to prompt me into a psychotic killing spree to become King of England, because I'm not interested. You'll have to do better than that.

SEYTON: Oh, I intend to, sire. Let me be more specific and give you a glimpse of the future. In a hundred years time, a man called William Shakespeare will write a play called the Tragedie of Richard of Gloucester. This play. (thud of large manuscript) It is about a noble man who was made Protector of his nephews, one of whom happened to be heir to the throne. It tells how he loyally took his nephew to London to be crowned King of England.

RICHARD: (yawns) Hardly a tragedy.

SEYTON: Well, there's more. It tells how his young nephew allowed himself to be influenced by the conniving Woodvilles, how they poisoned the King's mind against him and had poor Richard imprisoned for treason, tortured and put to death. Naturally, this made the young King very unpopular in the country.

RICHARD: Naturally.

SEYTON: This young and foolish King was eventually deposed by the French and brought the whole English monarchy down with him. That's what I call a tragedy, my Lord.

RICHARD: It's a bit fanciful for me

SEYTON: It's the future, sire. Your future, if you allow Edward to ascend to the throne, if you allow him or his brother to live.

JUDITH: Good evening, sir. I am Susan and I will be your serving wench for this evening. Would you like to sit in carousing or non-carousing?

DOCTOR: Oh, er, carousing. Why not, eh? Get a bit of the local favour.

JUDITH: Certainly, sir. What would you like to drink?

DOCTOR: Wine would be nice. What wines do you have?

JUDITH: We've got barely drinkable, sir, and non-drinkable.

DOCTOR: Then barely drinkable would be fine. Just a small tankard, please. I'm driving.

JUDITH: Your wine, sir. Would you like to take advantage of our special dinner and debauchery two for one offer? Buy any of the selected meals from our menu and I will sit on your lap and giggle suggestively for the rest of the evening.

DOCTOR: Er, you do look about 14.

JUDITH: Yes, sir, I am that.

DOCTOR: Yes, I thought you were.

JUDITH: So that's a yes, then.

DOCTOR: That's a no, but thank you all the same. But I wonder if you could help me in another matter.

JUDITH: Sir?

DOCTOR: I'm a merchant. I've been abroad for a few years and I feel so out of touch with English politics. Tell me, how fares young Edward the Fifth?

JUDITH: Edward the Fifth? Why, you're out of touch. He was deposed by his uncle Richard. I thought the whole world knew that.

DOCTOR: Oh, really. Well I never did. What a shame.

JUDITH: Probably for the best, sir. We don't need some boy running the country. We could do with a smack of firm government.

DOCTOR: And is young Edward all right?

JUDITH: Oh yes, fine. He's up at the Tower. Him and his brother living like royalty, they are, which is bitterly ironic if you think about it.

DOCTOR: So you've seen them, then?

JUDITH: If you're interested in the Princes, would you like a coronation mug? Jude!

SUSAN: Yes?

JUDITH: Get the mug down from the shelf, will ya?

SUSAN: Hang on.

JUDITH: That's Judith, she's my sister.

SUSAN: Here you go, sir. Sorry it's a bit dusty.

DOCTOR: Commemorating the happy coronation of Edward the Fifth, King of England, on this day the 24th of June 1483.

SUSAN: My uncle Clarrie, he's the landlord of the tavern, the one over there dancing on the table and vomiting over his regulars, he's says they're collectors items now on account of

JUDITH: On account of it not happening.

SUSAN: We've got plates too, and tea towels.

DOCTOR: It does seem rather sad, holding the faded remnants of a reign that never was.

JUDITH: Oh no, sir.

SUSAN: Oh, no, no.

JUDITH: Not sad.

SUSAN: Or faded. Just look at patina.

JUDITH: Not sad at all. I'm sure the young Prince never wanted to be King at all, all that responsibility, collecting those taxes, executing traitors.

DOCTOR: I tell you what. I'll buy a mug off you and a few of those tea towels if you show me where you last saw the Princes.

JUDITH: Oh, all right. As long as Uncle Clarrie won't miss us.

SUSAN: He won't. He's barely started the song about the Dingle Dangle Dido. He'll be going through those verses for the next three hours.

JUDITH: There you go, Doctor. You can see the Tower from this hill, not to mention most of London. Now, see that down there? That's the Garden Tower. That's where the Princes are kept.

DOCTOR: Yes, the Garden Tower. If I remember right eventually to find fame under the less welcoming name of the Bloody Tower. And you've definitely seen them?

JUDITH: Oh yeah. They usually come down to the Constable's garden for some exercise a couple of times a day.

DOCTOR: Somehow I doubt we'll see them today.

SUSAN: Oh, there they are.

DOCTOR: I don't believe it.

SUSAN: Told you, Doctor. There they are. Don't think Edward minds too much not being King. Look, he gets to play tennis all day, lucky bloke.

DOCTOR: This isn't right. The last sighting of the Princes was in 1484 yet here they are in plain view in 1485.

JUDITH: What's that, Doctor?

DOCTOR: Nothing. Just a feeling that something isn't quite right here, that's all.

SUSAN: Look, they're doing star jumps now. Get those hands in the air, boys.

JUDITH: Look at those arms waving. They're certainly going for it.

DOCTOR: Let's get back to the tavern. I have to meet some friends.

PERI: Okay. The deal is, when we see the Doctor we don't mention who we found in the forest, we don't say who we met in the inn, and we don't say what we discovered.

ERIMEM: What about the Tardis?

PERI: I think we'll have to tell him it's missing. Even if we don't, I'm sure he'll eventually guess.

ERIMEM: I can't see the Doctor.

PERI: I'm sure he'll pop in from time to time and keep an eye out for us.

ERIMEM: We're a bit late.

PERI: I'd hardly call three days a bit late. I hope the Doctor waited for us. I just hope he hasn't got itchy feet and gone gallivanting round the universe leaving us in the Middle Ages. That would be just like him.

ERIMEM: Peri, we haven't talked about what happened.

PERI: In what way?

ERIMEM: Well, I hope we didn't change history with our actions, that's all.

PERI: Don't worry, we didn't.

ERIMEM: Are you sure?

PERI: Look, I brought some notes with me just in case of such an eventuality. I had the Tardis computer link to some world computer they've got in the 21st century called the Internet. It's got all the details about Richard the Third down here. Oh, wait a minute, that's not right.

ERIMEM: What's wrong? What's the matter?

DOCTOR: Forty three verses, amazing. I can't believe how many times that comely maid dingle dangled his dongler in a dairy-i-di-doo.

CLARRIE: Ah well, when it comes to dingle dangling, tis well to keep your hand in, otherwise you might lose the knack.

DOCTOR: Anyway, I really must be getting along, Mister Clarrie. I hadn't intended on staying so long in your establishment. My friends were to have met me here, but they seem to have mislaid themselves, as usual.

CLARRIE: Ha! Less of the Mister Clarrie, Doctor. They'll start to think me a gentleman. Don't stand on ceremony, Doctor. Folks call me one-armed Clarrie, don't they, boys?

DOCTOR: Really? That is odd, because as I look at you, the thing that does strike me almost immediately is that you do seem to be the proud owner of two rather large, hairy, and fully functional arms.

CLARRIE: Ah. Oh, I see what you're getting at. I got me nickname from when I had me arm broken, oh, two years ago now. I had it in a sling for a whole two months. The lads all noticed, and with a flash of wit that they're famed for, came up with me nickname. And there you are. One-armed Clarrie.

DOCTOR: I see. Now you seem to have two fully functioning arms, perhaps your regulars could think up another nickname?

(Silence.)

MAN: What? How'd you mean?

MAN 2: You mean like two-armed Clarrie?

DOCTOR: I wasn't actually suggesting anything that...

MAN: What kind of nickname is that?

MAN 2: It's a rubbish one, that's what that is.

MAN: He's trying to make us look like idiots.

DOCTOR: No, sorry, forget it. I was mad to even contemplate it.

(Noise restarts.)

CLARRIE: It's a fine nickname. You don't come by good nicknames every day of the week. Oh, it's usually Big Fred or Little Joe, or about-medium-height-slender-build-with-fair-hair Roy. It has to be nurtured and loved. Best thing that ever happened to me, getting it broke. And let me tell you, thereby hangs a tale, sir. Old war wound, of course. Battle of Tewkesbury, 1471, I fought off 20 crazed Lancastrians with nought but a bent spoon.

MAN: Eh? I thought it was that skinny-bottomed wench you tried to fondle.

CLARRIE: I'll thank you to keep your mouth shut, Pleasant Open-faced Pete.

DOCTOR: Sorry? A wench, I mean, a girl broke your arm?

MAN: Yeah, quite a vixen she was.

CLARRIE: Pay no heed to him, sir. His mind is addled. He used to think himself a kestrel and throw himself out of trees. Always landed on his head when he tried to swoop for voles.

MAN: I never did.

CLARRIE: Don't worry, you will.

DOCTOR: Gentlemen, please. This girl, she wasn't called Erimem, by any chance?

CLARRIE: Oh, you've met her, then.

DOCTOR: When did you say this was?

CLARRIE: Oh, must be about a year and a half ago now. No, no, I tell a lie, more like two years.

DOCTOR: Oh no. This is very worrying.

CLARRIE: It's all right, it was a clean break.
DOCTOR: Something's wrong. Something's very wrong.

PERI: Something's gone very wrong. The things we witnessed, all of them, it says here they all took place in 1483.
ERIMEM: But shouldn't we be in 1485?
PERI: Yep, that's right.
ERIMEM: Oh dear. Well, the Doctor told us not to be late. If anything, we're a little bit early.

[Part Two]

DOCTOR: Tell me exactly what happened? How were they? Were they all right?
CLARRIE: They were fine. They worked here for about six months. Good workers. Shame I had to get rid of them.
DOCTOR: You did what?
CLARRIE: Only in a business sense, Doctor. Had to do a favour and hire in my (ahem) two nieces instead. Have you met them? Lovely girls. They needed a job and a place to stay, you see.
DOCTOR: So did Peri and Erimem.
CLARRIE: Blood's thicker than water, Doctor. You know that.
DOCTOR: Anyway, what's done is done. So, they've been plonked into 1483. Why on Earth

PERI: Would the Tardis do that?
ERIMEM: More to the point, what do we do now?
PERI: What can we do? I mean, we can hardly... Wait. Just a minute. I've got an idea. I wonder if they've got quill and parchment anywhere in this place.
ERIMEM: You're going to write a letter for the Doctor?
PERI: Trust me. I saw this done in a movie. Here we go. Dear Doctor. Help, exclamation mark.

DOCTOR: Exclamation mark. The Tardis dumped us in 1483, but I guess you know that by now. What should we do?
CLARRIE: Kept that letter for two years, I did. They said to keep a look-out for someone dressed oddly with a worried expression on his face.
DOCTOR: I'm very grateful.
CLARRIE: No trouble. My fee'll be quite modest.

ERIMEM: But Peri, how does he send word to us when he's in our future?
CLARRIE: Hang on a minute, you two. You ain't Peri and Erimem, are you? I've got a letter for you two. Northern chap with big ears left it for you about two years ago.
(The 9th Doctor tying up loose ends, then.)
PERI: (reads) Dear Peri and Erimem. Don't panic. Just get back to the Tardis and find a small switch on the base of the panel nearest the scanner. That's the fast return switch. Give it a clockwise twist and it should get you back to 1485.

DOCTOR: There. I've written a letter to them and enclosed a note to me to remind myself to give it to them. I only hope I'll be passing through the 15th century in the future and remember to leave it with you, that's all.
CLARRIE: Good-o. Oh, I've just remembered something else. They left you another letter with strict instructions that it should be opened directly after you opened that one.
DOCTOR: (reads) Dear Doctor. Oh, great advice. Nice one. The Tardis has vanished. Is it all right to panic now? Of course. I should have realised. If they were able to do as I told them, you would have no memory of them staying in your time. And anyway, they would have still met me at the appointed time, as they would have had plenty of time in our time to make it here on time, so to speak.
CLARRIE: Are you drunk or am I, cos one of us certainly is.

PERI: So, what are we going to do now?
ERIMEM: The Doctor will think of something, I'm sure.
CLARRIE: Do you know, my dears, I clean forgot that bloke left you another letter with instructions that it only be read after you opened that one.
PERI: (reads) Dear Peri and Erimem. Oh dear. Look, just keep your heads down and try not to get in the way of history. I'll try and find you two years from now, right near the end of Richard's reign. It's the 1st of August 1485 where I am. I'll try to find you from here. Brave hearts, both of you. PS, on no account try to find out who killed the Princes in the Tower on your own. We shall leave that little investigation to another time. Sincerely, the Doctor. Great. What do we do in the meantime to keep us out of history's way?
ERIMEM: There's more writing on the other side.

PERI: PPS. Far be it for me to tempt fate at all, but the Clarrie in my time zone says you two were the best serving wenches he'd ever had. Oh no. No, please, not here.

ERIMEM: At least it's safe. No one will think of looking for us in here.

CLARRIE: Are you saying you want to work here, in this disgusting, filth-stained, rat-infested hell-hole?

PERI: I can't believe I'm saying this, but yes. Yes, we do.

CLARRIE: Then welcome to the finest drinking establishment in London. I just know we're going to get along like a privy on fire. Come here, girl. Give us a hug.

PERI: Oh, watch where you're putting those paws.

CLARRIE: And you, my dark-eyed enchantress, give your old Clarrie a hug.

ERIMEM: Urgh!

PERI: Clarrie, no. I really wouldn't put your hand

(Crack!)

CLARRIE: Ow!

PERI: There. Oh, sorry about that.

CLARRIE: All right, all right. You're making enough noise to wake the dead. Worse, you've made enough noise to wake the drunk. Who's there.

DOCTOR [OC]: It's me.

(Door opens and closes.)

CLARRIE: No luck?

DOCTOR: No Peri, no Erimem, no Tardis. They haven't turned up here, I take it?

CLARRIE: 'Fraid not.

DOCTOR: I'll look again for them in the morning. I wonder if I could prevail on you for a room for the night? I will of course pay you handsomely.

CLARRIE: Doctor, I already consider you as a dear and trusted friend. And as a personal friend, I will not insult you by refusing to take your money.

DOCTOR: That certainly means a lot to me.

CLARRIE: Well, you just go up and make yourself comfortable. Just up them stairs and try every door you come to. When the screams stop, you'll know you've found the bedroom that isn't used by either of my two nieces.

DOCTOR: Where on Earth have you two got to?

DOCTOR: Well, as I'm stuck here I might as well apply myself to another puzzle, namely how did I see the Princes in 1485 when history tells me they weren't seen after 1484. Hmm. How about you, Doctor?

DOCTOR 4: (recording) Did Richard the Third kill the Princes in the Tower? Well, that's the question, isn't it? Why bother when he had already established himself as Royal Protector? He was practically the King in all but name anyway.

DOCTOR: Good point.

DOCTOR 4: (recording) All accounts show that Richard was popular. The Woodvilles were distrusted like the nouveau riche of their day. His position was secure. Why would he throw it all away with a senseless act of bloodshed which was completely out of character?

DOCTOR: Why indeed? Pithy and informative, but it doesn't help me answer any questions. Perhaps if I take a...

(Heavy footsteps, Clarrie coughing. Another door opens and closes.)

DOCTOR: Now where are you going in such a hurry in the middle of the night?

CLARRIE: Are you there?

RICHARD: Yes.

CLARRIE: Good. Right. The cat, the rat and Lovell the dog rule all England under a hog.

RICHARD: What?

CLARRIE: I said, the cat and the rat and

RICHARD: I heard what you said. Why did you say it?

CLARRIE: Well, I thought I should have a code phrase so's you can identify me.

RICHARD: Then think again, you clod. Just sit still a minute and your distinctive smell'll do the identifying, no trouble. So, he's here then.

CLARRIE: Yep.

RICHARD: Then they were right, to the day. Did he come with you?

CLARRIE: I should hope so. I coughed up so hard outside his door I nearly turned me boots inside out.

RICHARD: Well, where is he then?

CLARRIE: I should imagine he's hiding behind that...

CLARRIE [OC]: ...wall over there, watching us.

DOCTOR: Whoops. Oh dear.

TYRELL: (slightly effete) 'Ere, hello.
DOCTOR: Oh, hello
TYRELL: How are you?
DOCTOR: Oh, fine.
TYRELL: Good, good. Good. So, what brings you out on a night like this?
DOCTOR: Well, I was following this man, only I seem to have been lured into some kind of trap. And you?
TYRELL: Well, it's my job, you see.
DOCTOR: Oh, really?
TYRELL: Oh yes. I'm the Royal High Concussor, you know.
DOCTOR: How interesting.
TYRELL: Oh yes, it is. Hence this cosh. Lovely night.
DOCTOR: So it is. Do you know, I've never heard of that title?
TYRELL: Well, we don't get out much.
DOCTOR: That's a shame.
TYRELL: No, I'm only called out when the King wants someone knocked on the head quite hard.
DOCTOR: Is that all?
TYRELL: It's more ceremonial than anything. Still, sometimes duty calls.
DOCTOR: Must be very exciting when that happens.
TYRELL: Oh yes. I can't tell you how exciting that it. Exciting is the word, all right.
DOCTOR: Anyway...
TYRELL: Oh, sorry. Here's me prattling on. We don't get much of an opportunity to chat in my line of work.
DOCTOR: Likewise.
TYRELL: Oh, bless. Don't forget, when you land, swing your knees round
DOCTOR: I certainly
(Thump! Thud.)

STAFFORD: I wouldn't get up to quickly if I were you. This floor has many unpleasant things upon it. I'd hate your lunch to join them.
DOCTOR: You'd think after all these centuries I'd start to be wary of men with large blunt instruments.
STAFFORD: I assume you offended our beloved King.
DOCTOR: I usually do. However, on this occasion I didn't have the chance. First I lose my friends and my transport, then I wake up in here. Not the best day I've ever had. I'm the Doctor, by the way.
STAFFORD: Henry. Henry Stafford.
DOCTOR: What brings you here?
STAFFORD: Oh, a bit of treason. I lead a rebellion against the King. Just a little one, mind, but he still took offence.
DOCTOR: Kings tend to do that.
STAFFORD: I must have caught him at a bad day.
DOCTOR: I can see that. I can see from here that you're suffering from dehydration, bruising, lack of fingernails. You certainly have been in the wars.
STAFFORD: I feel like I fought the War of the Roses single-handed. You say you've lost some friends?
DOCTOR: Yes. Peri and Erimem. You wouldn't know them...
STAFFORD: Oh, them. I know them all right.
DOCTOR: You've met them?
STAFFORD: You could say I have. About eighteen months ago, in Stoney Stratford.
DOCTOR: Stoney Stratford?
STAFFORD: Yes.
DOCTOR: Not in London?
STAFFORD: No.
DOCTOR: If I ever get the Tardis back, I am definitely going to have a long hard look at those drift compensators.

ERIMEM: Look, down there. There's someone under those trees.
PERI: Who is it?
ERIMEM: Oh no. Peri, I, I think it's a body.
PERI: Is it the Doctor?
ERIMEM: No, it's, it's just a boy.
PERI: Oh no, is he...?
ERIMEM: What?
PERI: Is he?
ERIMEM: Is he what?
PERI: Is he dead?
ERIMEM: Dead? Why didn't you say so?

PERI: I didn't want to say the word.

ERIMEM: You are so squeamish. I cannot understand how you and your people can be so scared of death, so frightened of the commonest thing in the world.

PERI: All right, all right. But is he?

ERIMEM: He's not dead. He has a mark on his face. I think he was running through the forest and he ran into this branch. We can't leave him here.

PERI: I can see some lights. I think there's a village.

ERIMEM: If you could take his other arm?

STAFFORD: So what did this Seyton have to say for himself?

RICHARD: Oh, you know, you're going on a long journey, blah, blah. You may or may not meet a tall dark handsome stranger who may or may not try to cut your head off. The usual load of horse's pizzle.

STAFFORD: That's it?

RICHARD: Yep.

STAFFORD: He seemed to think it was very important to see you. I thought it would be... something else.

RICHARD: Well, it wasn't.

STAFFORD: Where is he?

RICHARD: He's gone back to his machine. He wants us to put it on a cart.

STAFFORD: He's coming with us?

RICHARD: Yep. Got a problem with that?

STAFFORD: Well...

RICHARD: Good. Time for bed, I think.

MAN: Sire, sire.

RICHARD: What's going on?

MAN: Er, he's gone.

RICHARD: Who's gone?

MAN: I only stepped out for a minute.

RICHARD: Who's gone?

MAN: The Prince.

RICHARD: You're joking. I hope. Cos I'm not good with jokes. You ask Bucko here.

MAN: He got out the window.

RICHARD: You stupid idiot. I'll rip your lungs out and use them for bagpipes for this. Right, he can't have got far. You take some men and search through the village.

ERIMEM: Hello?

RICHARD: Procter, you and me search out side. See if we can pick up his trail.

PERI: Hi, everyone.

RICHARD: He still relies on his mother's family. He'll probably try and avoid the roads and make back for Northampton, and join up with the rest of Rivers' troops.

MAN: Er, sire.

RICHARD: Don't worry, he can't have got far.

MAN: Sire.

RICHARD: What!

PERI: Hi. Is there anywhere we can put this guy?

RICHARD: Oh. Ah.

ERIMEM: If you're going to stare, could one of you do it from under his shoulder? He's getting very heavy.

STAFFORD: His room's up through there. Second door on the left. I'll give you a hand.

ERIMEM: Thanks.

STAFFORD: Just put him down there. Where did you find him?

PERI: In the forest. He was running, and I guess he wasn't looking too hard where he was going.

ERIMEM: He got a nasty knock. I hope he's all right.

STAFFORD: I can't deny we've been worried about him. Your help has been, to say the least, unexpected.

PERI: That's us. Unexpected.

STAFFORD: Just as well you came along. There are wolves in that forest. Lord Gloucester will be very grateful. He's sure to reward you. Well, I'll leave you to it.

PERI: What?

STAFFORD: Well, you are women. You can tend to him, can you not?

PERI: Oh, hold on just a minute. Just cos I've got bumps down my front doesn't mean to say that

ERIMEM: Good idea. We as the weaker sex need to tend to him and balm him and bathe his forehead.

STAFFORD: All right.

ERIMEM: Goodbye. Bye, sir. Hurry up and shut the door. We have much balm to do. Lots of tending. Bye.
(Door closes.)

PERI: What's got into you?

ERIMEM: We need to talk.
PERI: About?
ERIMEM: About what he just said.
PERI: That he's very grateful and might reward us? Great news, but I'm afraid we're a bit too early for air miles.
ERIMEM: No, he said Lord Gloucester would be very grateful.
PERI: Well, yes, he said.
ERIMEM: Lord Gloucester.
PERI: Lord
ERIMEM: As in Duke of?
PERI: Gloucester.
ERIMEM: Yes!
PERI: As in Richard.
ERIMEM: The Third. Yes!
PERI: Oh, wow! Then he must be
(Door opens.)
STAFFORD: Everything all right? Do you need anything?
PERI + ERIMEM: We're fine!
(Door closes.)
PERI: Then this must be...
ERIMEM: Exactly.
PERI: He can't be.
ERIMEM: Look at his tunic. Look at the coat of arms on it.
PERI: Erimem, you know what this means.
ERIMEM: No.
PERI: We can save him!
ERIMEM: Peri, no!
PERI: We can save him!
ERIMEM: Do not even think of such a thing. We have to get out of here right now.

RICHARD: So, where have these two super-wenches come from?
STAFFORD: Not that sure, Sire. Still, bit of luck them being about, isn't it? He could have made it back to London without us, become a puppet King for the Woodvilles. You would have been in for a whole dunghill of trouble there.
RICHARD: Yeah. Trouble. He would have been, wouldn't he.
STAFFORD: Are you all right, Sire?
RICHARD: Just indulging in a little hobby of mine.
STAFFORD: What hobby, my Lord?
RICHARD: Thinking.

PERI: Yes, okay. Damn it. You're right. Sorry.
ERIMEM: Good.
PERI: Fine.
ERIMEM: Good!
PERI: Well, the least we can do is make him comfortable. History doesn't tell us the Prince died from hypothermia lying on his bedcovers in a draughty room, does it?
ERIMEM: No, I suppose.
PERI: You hold him upright, I'll get his boots off. Wait a minute. Ow!
ERIMEM: What now?
PERI: It's artificial! It's metal!
ERIMEM: What?
PERI: Just listen. He's some kind of robot.
ERIMEM: His arms are soft. He seems real from this end.
PERI: Oh, my God, this bit's detachable. He's not real!
(Knock on door.)
STAFFORD [OC]: Sure you're all right?
PERI + ERIMEM: We're fine!
(Footsteps recede.)
PERI: We've got to get out of here. There's something nasty and alien happening here. We have to find the Doctor.
(Door opens.)
ERIMEM: There's no one about. We might be able to get down the stairs without anyone seeing.
PERI: They must have all gone to be with

STAFFORD: Mistress Peri and Erimem. Is our young Prince comfortable?

PERI: Yep, he's fine. No problem.

RICHARD: Of course he's all right. It's not unnatural for a lad to get the jitters at the prospect of becoming ruler of this sceptre isle. The responsibility of command, having to endure the sycophancy of one's subjects.

STAFFORD: Not everyone can be like you, Sire.

RICHARD: Nice crawling, Bucko, but you're absolutely right. I'm sure when Edward realises what an honour it is to lead England with me at his side, he'll be terribly excited.

PERI: I'm sure he'll be in bits. I mean, yes, I'm sure you're right.

RICHARD: Now, we are forever in your debt. Is there anything I can do for you two ladies? Anything at all.

ERIMEM: All we need are directions. Just point us towards Fleet Street, if you please.

STAFFORD: Fleet Street? In London? You've got a bit of a walk. London is fifty miles from here.

PERI: I knew it. I knew it!

STAFFORD: We're setting off for London ourselves in the morning. It would be an honour if you would ride with us.

PERI: We wouldn't dream of putting you to any trouble.

STAFFORD: The next morning they'd gone, not that anyone really noticed. Not with Richard behaving so unlike himself.

DOCTOR: Really? How so?

STAFFORD: Well, he went in to check on the Prince, and when he emerged, his manner changed. He became twitchy, troubled, almost addled in his mind. When we got back to London he went completely loopy. He arrested many without reason, letting them go almost immediately, also without cause. He executed Hastings, an old friend of the young King. And then he did something that proved beyond a shadow of a doubt that he was completely barking.

STAFFORD: You've done what?

RICHARD: Steady on, Bucko. This will mean I will be King, you know. Show a little bit of respect.

STAFFORD: I thought the plan, Sire, was that the young King would be guided by your wise counsel until he came of age, and after being properly educated, he would in turn be eternally grateful to you and others in your service.

RICHARD: Yeah. A shame. That would have been a good plan.

STAFFORD: Then why?

RICHARD: Information has come to light which changes everything.

STAFFORD: What information?

RICHARD: Information. That's all you need to know.

STAFFORD: What? I demand to know

RICHARD: You demand nothing. Just because you've been loyal doesn't mean you can tell a King what to do. I was loyal to my brother. I never lectured him, and by God it was tempting at times to give him a good shake.

STAFFORD: But sir, this could plunge the country back into civil war. I urge you not to take this course of action.

RICHARD: Too late. At this moment my new advisor is conducting a press conference with the finest gossips in England.

(Jabber of women's voices.)

SEYTON: Yes, you, madam. Yes, the crazed crone in the third row. The one with the blackened teeth.

ELLIE: Ellie Merriweather, Lincolnshire Tattletale. Mister Seyton, can you comment on these rumours. Has the previous King's marriage to Elizabeth been declared null and void?

SEYTON: No one is more shocked than the Royal Protector at this shocking development. The evidence that has been brought to light will be thoroughly investigated and action will be taken.

ELLIE: Did you say you have evidence?

SEYTON: Well, naturally, this information is so sensitive that the actual evidence we have is completely confidential, and will probably never be released in the public domain. Security reasons. I'm sure you understand. He has regrettably taken this step to defer the coronation and to declare the Princes bastards, to save the Royal Family from a greater scandal should these facts embarrass the country after Prince Edward has been made King. Yes, you there. The large whiskery drunk with the huge red nose. Yes, you, madam.

DOLLY: Dolly Trubshaw, Wessex Busybody. Is there any truth to the rumour that Richard of Gloucester has set his eyes on the top job himself?

SEYTON: His Lordship has no ambitions in that regard. However, should he be pressed by colleagues, he may reluctantly be persuaded to service his country in that regard. (*see Yes Minister – Party Games*) Now if you'll excuse me, ladies. Thank you. I have duties to attend to. Portraits will be taken later.

RICHARD: Lovely. That's that done. Now I can crown myself King.

STAFFORD: Is that it?

RICHARD: No, it's not. Those two wenches, Peri and the dusky one, where are they?

STAFFORD: I don't know. We haven't seen them since Stoney Stratford. Why, does it matter?

RICHARD: Yes, it matters, because I've decided it matters. They seem like a pair of spunky little wenches and not uncomely. I would like them to attend the Princes.

STAFFORD: To be maidservants to the Court? But they're completely unsuitable.

RICHARD: And why would that be?

STAFFORD: Well, what of their family, their breeding? I did get the distinct impression that they weren't of noble birth.

RICHARD: I don't think you heard the news flash, Bucko, but neither are the boys now. Off you go.

STAFFORD: This is madness. Who is this man who casts a glamour on Richard?

TYRELL: Who are you going on about?

(*Trivia – the part played by Patrick Troughton in the movie.*)

STAFFORD: Oh, it's you, Tyrell. I was talking about this future-man who casts a spell on Gloucester. This Seyton.

TYRELL: Oh, I see. A wee twinge of jealousy, perhaps?

STAFFORD: Oh, of course not. I don't trust him. I take against men with pointy little beards. They should have the courage to grow a proper full beard or be clean-shaven.

TYRELL: You're not with-it, are you, Buckingham. Little pointed beards are all the rage in France, I hear. They're the fashion statement for the 1480s. Large open-necked beards are so 70s.

STAFFORD: A passing fashion, that's all he is. Richard will see him for what he is.

TYRELL: Oh, I don't know. They seem pretty cosy. You'll need a revolution to prise that man's fingers from the throne.

STAFFORD: Yes, that's what I thought too.

SEYTON: I don't think Buckingham's very happy, do you?

RICHARD: C'est la vie, as they say in Scotland.

SEYTON: Sire, it is not enough to remove the Princes from the succession. You have to remove them permanently. Make an announcement. Tell the good people of England they were plotting with the Woodvilles to overthrow you, and they had to be executed for treason.

RICHARD: That's an option. But between you and me, murdering the sons of my beloved big brother is quite low on my list of alternatives at the moment. They're hardly a threat.

SEYTON: But what if the Princes were to be rescued, or they tried to escape? If they were out there in the country, a focus of discontent...

RICHARD: Possibly. Look, Mister Seyton, leave me. It's been a rather eventful day and I'm a bit bushed.

DOCTOR: Right, Buckingham. We're getting out of here.

STAFFORD: I think it's too late for me, Doctor.

DOCTOR: Nonsense. There's still hope left. Look at these manacles I'm wearing. They aren't attached to chains at all. They're just connected to heavy rope.

STAFFORD: Yes, some are like that. Forging iron's an expensive business. We need most of it for the war effort. What of it?

DOCTOR: Don't you see? If we can find something sharp, I can cut myself out of them. If I can just get a hand... voila! One coronation mug. Shame it's a collector's item, but needs must. (smash) There. If I can move one of the larger pieces over in my direction. Gotcha now. This may take some time. Peri and Erimem, did you find them? What happened to them?

STAFFORD: Oh yes, I found them. As to what happened to them, well, that's another st... Why are you looking at me in such an odd way?

DOCTOR: Sorry, I just realised. Henry. Henry Stafford, 2nd Duke of Buckingham. Thought I knew the name.

STAFFORD: That I am. Or was. What of it?

DOCTOR: Nothing. I didn't expect...

STAFFORD: Expect what?

DOCTOR: It's not important.

STAFFORD: What didn't you expect?

RICHARD: He didn't expect you to be alive, Bucko. You see, you should have died in November '83. The Doctor's surprised to find you here twenty months after you should have pegged it. Sorry, was I interrupting?

DOCTOR: I presume you're King Richard.

RICHARD: He presumes. How quickly they forget. One moment your portrait is hanging on everyone's wall, the next moment it's Richard? Wasn't he King or something?

DOCTOR: Is it common practice for kings to hang around street corners in the middle of the night chatting to drunken landlords?

RICHARD: It's a hobby.

DOCTOR: I suppose you want to know what I'm doing here, why I'm snooping around asking questions, stuff like that.

RICHARD: Oh, I know. You're some kind of alien. I know you travel in Time and Space in some kind of machine. I know what you're doing here.

DOCTOR: I'm sorry? Who told you something as daft as that?

RICHARD: My new and trusted advisor, one Mister Seyton. Remember him, Bucko? Yeah, I'm sure you do. Now, amongst the many innovations he's brought to my kingdom is improved public relations. He's already sold the regime change extremely effectively, and if there's any bad PR, he's brought in a rapid rebuttal unit. Now, say hello to Mister Tyrell. He's gonna start the torturing, so any time you feel you know the tune, you can sing along. All right?

TYRELL: Oh, hello, Doctor. We meet again.

DOCTOR: Charmed. Weren't you the Royal Concussor just this morning?

RICHARD: Another thing Mister Seyton has introduced is multi-skilling.

DOCTOR: Does Mister Tyrell always carry that branding iron?

RICHARD: The branding iron is the rapid rebuttal unit I mentioned earlier, Doctor.

DOCTOR: I see. Well, all right, as you asked nicely, I'll tell you why I'm here. Would you believe I'm the correspondent from the Good Cell Guide, and I'm delighted to tell you that I haven't enjoyed my stay at all. I'm awarding you four out of a possible five slop buckets.

RICHARD: Oh, we are too damn clever by half, aren't we.

DOCTOR: Actually, no, I tell a lie. I'm a performance artist from the 20th century, and this is my latest installation. I was going to call it 'Two Men Chained To A Wall', but then I thought Freedom would give it a bit more intellectual gravitas.

RICHARD: Very funny, Doctor. I'll just collect my head from the floor where I just laughed it off. Okay, off you go, Tyrell.

TYRELL: Sorry about this, but, you know, more than my job's worth and all that malarkey.

DOCTOR: It's quite all right. I'm sure it's going to hurt you more than it hurts me.

TYRELL: You could be right there.

(Sizzle. Stafford screams.)

DOCTOR: No! Stop! You should be torturing me, not him.

RICHARD: Should I? Did I say I was going to torture you? I don't think I did, did I?

(Sizzle. Stafford screams.)

DOCTOR: All right, all right. Look, I'm doing research. I'll tell you anything you want to know. Leave him alone!

RICHARD: Oh, I thought I'd mentioned, I already know all about you, Doctor. That's why I'm torturing him. He's the traitor, not you.

(Sizzle. Stafford screams.)

RICHARD: Ooo, I didn't expect you to get him there. Very creative.

DOCTOR: Why are you doing this?

RICHARD: I've got a pretty good idea of what kind of person you are. I'm just showing you what kind of person I am. I'm a simple man, Doctor. If I wake up in the morning and my head's still connected to my shoulders, and I'm not forced to speak French, I see that as one of the good days. I've had my brother, my wife and son taken from me by illness, and my brothers and father taken from me by war and politics. The only thing I've got left in me is loyalty, love of what's left of one's country and one's family. Give me that here!

(Sizzle. Stafford screams.)

RICHARD: You want to know if I killed the Princes in the Tower, do you? You want to know if I'm a goodie or a baddie, don't you?

DOCTOR: Well...

RICHARD: Don't you?

DOCTOR: Yes.

RICHARD: You see, I know about you, Doctor. I might not know everything, but I know the type of person you are. The kind of preachy, namby-pamby, wishy-washy, holier than thou, lily-livered milksop you are. The kind who doesn't make hard choices, the person who just waltzes into a King's life to do research on him.

(Sizzle. Stafford screams.)

RICHARD: Just to show you what kind of person I am, Doctor, I do what I have to do. I destroy those who oppose me, but I don't destroy without reason.

DOCTOR: Buckingham, Henry, are you all right?

RICHARD: Spare no mind for him, Doctor. He's a traitor and a dog.

DOCTOR: You obviously don't know me as well as you think.

(Door closes.)

STAFFORD: I'm fine, Doctor.

DOCTOR: No, you're not fine. You're anything but fine. We have to get out of here and get you some treatment.

STAFFORD: Oh no, forget about treatment. I haven't finished. I have to tell you what happened to your

friends. I have to tell you how they died.

DOCTOR: They're dead?

STAFFORD: It was him. He killed them. He killed them, Doctor.

CLARRIE: Come on, then. When they buy an ale from you, what do you say to the customer?

ERIMEM: Have you ever thought of buying one of our home-made meat pies, sir or madam? It makes a nice accompaniment to any refreshment.

CLARRIE: Good. And if they buy one, what do you say when they next come to the counter?

ERIMEM: Would you like to buy another of our ales, sir or madam. We find it by far the best way of taking away the taste of our meat pies.

CLARRIE: Good gal. I'll make a serving wench of you yet. Now, you stay here and greet the customers, and if you're very lucky I'll give you some more personal attention later.

ERIMEM: And if you're very lucky you'll keep your other arm.

CLARRIE: Oh. Have you finished washing that floor, girl?

PERI: Not really. I'm not really getting anywhere. The water from the well seems to be dirtier than the floor.

CLARRIE: Oh yeah, I've found that. I think it's why I gave up cleaning it years ago.

ERIMEM: Oh Peri, you look so cute down there in your apron.

PERI: I don't feel cute. I feel like I should have a pumpkin and some ugly sisters in tow.

MAN: I don't know why you prefer the skinny lass, Clarrie.

CLARRIE: I don't like wenches with big portions. They give the customers too much beef. No, I like 'em with the bones showing, then I can dally with 'em all I like without lying awake thinking about me overheads.

STAFFORD: Hey, you there, landlord. Any chance of a drink? My stomach feels like my head's been chopped off.

CLARRIE: Yeah, yeah, I'm coming. Oh cripes.

STAFFORD: You there, under the table. Stand up when you address a duke.

CLARRIE: Er, right you are, sir. Just opening a new barrel.

STAFFORD: Wait a minute. Don't I know you, sir?

CLARRIE: Ah, well, I have got a familiar face. It's been commented on. Clarrie, my regulars say, the thing about your face is its familiarity.

STAFFORD: Clarrie? Wait a moment. I know you.

ERIMEM: Peri. Peri!

STAFFORD: God's fortune, it's them! It's the wenches.

ERIMEM: I still can't believe you even suggested rescuing the Prince, after all the Doctor's told us about Time.

PERI: Look, what difference would it have made if we'd rescued the Prince? Who would have noticed in the grand scheme of things? Don't forget the old Celestial Intervention Agency. The story changes, the ending stays the same.

ERIMEM: Which the Doctor told us to ignore.

PERI: Even if we could have stopped a murder?

ERIMEM: Peri! The Princes will die. They have always died, and for the sake of this land, for the sake of everything, the Princes have to die now.

STAFFORD: Well, at last. Look, who have we here? Our two wonder-wenches. The King would like to see you.

PERI: Erimem, run!

(Splash!)

ERIMEM: The bucket won't stop him for long.

PERI: No, but the water in it might. With any luck he'll get cholera. Oh.

TYRELL: Hello.

PERI: Hello.

TYRELL: Say hello, boys.

HENCHMEN: Hello.

TYRELL: Lovely to meet you both. I'm Sir James Tyrell, and I've come to take you away from all this.

STAFFORD: Richard has asked for you personally. You're to be maidservants to the Princes. Do you know what this means?

PERI: It means we've been rescued from one crummy job only to start another.

STAFFORD: It means, apart from Sir James Tyrell, you are the only ones to have personal access to the Princes. Well, don't you see?

ERIMEM: I'm sorry, we are but simple maidens. You'll have to spell it out to us.

STAFFORD: I heard you speaking in the tavern about how it's necessary for the future of us all for the Princes to die.

PERI: Eavesdropping is a very nasty habit, you know.

STAFFORD: Don't worry, my ladies. I agree with you.

ERIMEM: You do?

STAFFORD: Richard's mind has been bewitched by his new advisor. This time-travelling soothsayer is leading him and the country into ruin.

ERIMEM: Time travelling?

STAFFORD: A nasty piece of work, he seems. I don't trust him.

ERIMEM: This soothsayer, he's not a young fair-haired man in pale clothes and a vegetable growing out of his lapel?

STAFFORD: No, that's not him. Mister Seyton is dressed completely in black with dark eyes, a murderous expression, and a little pointed beard.

PERI: Oh boy. That certainly answers all my questions.

ERIMEM: What are you talking about?

PERI: I'll explain later.

STAFFORD: Richard is mad to think he can rule like this. He has to go.

PERI: So? What can we do about it?

STAFFORD: The country is ripe for uprising, and the Woodvilles are the only family that are powerful enough to even attempt it. Elizabeth doesn't seem to care. She's had her marriage declared void, her sons proclaimed bastards. She's given up hope. Even gave up her youngest son to join his brother in the arms of her sworn enemy for a piffling pension. They need a catalyst, a spur to move them against Richard. Just place this draught in their food after it has been tasted. If the Princes die in his care, it'll blacken his name and anger the people. If Elizabeth finds her sons murdered, perhaps it will end her unholy alliance with this man.

PERI: You're asking us to commit murder?

STAFFORD: It has to be done for the good of the country. (leaves)

ERIMEM: Do you know what this means, Peri? It means we're not going to change history, we *are* history. We're part of it.

PERI: It's not possible.

ERIMEM: I think we have solved the mystery. It's us, Peri. It is we who killed the Princes in the Tower.

[Part Three]

PERI [OC]: You're asking us to commit murder?

STAFFORD [OC]: It has to be done for the good of the country. (leaves)

ERIMEM [OC]: Do you know what this means, Peri? It means we're not going to change history, we *are* history. We're part of it.

PERI [OC]: It's not possible.

ERIMEM [OC]: I think we have solved the mystery. It's us, Peri. It is we who killed the Princes in the Tower. (Click.)

SEYTON: Fool. Stupid, primitive, interfering fool!

DOCTOR: Buckingham! Henry, wake up, man.

(Door opens.)

RICHARD: I think he's dead, Doctor. I don't think you'll get any more joy out of him.

(Door closes.)

DOCTOR: I have nothing to say to you.

RICHARD: Oh, don't be like that.

DOCTOR: Did you kill them?

RICHARD: What?

DOCTOR: Peri and Erimem. Did you kill them?

RICHARD: Me? You think I'm capable of killing a couple of kids? Murdering them in cold blood? Snuffing out a couple of young lives before they're even begun? Well, do you?

DOCTOR: Yes.

RICHARD: You're right, I am. Eminently capable. If it was necessary I'd do it without a second thought.

PERI: So what do we do?

ERIMEM: We go to the Princes' chamber, we seek out and dismantle these robots – if they *are* robots – then we escape and wait for the Doctor to turn up and collect us.

PERI: What happens if I'm wrong, if they aren't robots?

ERIMEM: If we are meant to kill them, then we are meant to kill them.

PERI: Erimem, you're talking about murder.

ERIMEM: No, I am talking about sacrifice.

PERI: Sacrifice?

ERIMEM: Many civilisations do it in the hope that it keeps the sun rising and the seasons keep turning. The

only difference is, we know for certain that without their sacrifices, without their deaths, there will be disaster.

PERI: It's still murder. It's horrible, inhuman.

ERIMEM: That's inhuman to you. I am a human. I do not worry about death. I've seen servants walled up so that their masters can take them to the hereafter. How many times must I hear this from you? I get very tired of having to live the world through your eyes, Peri.

PERI: Look, couldn't we just spirit him away? Take them to live with an old washerwoman like they do in those old Sunday afternoon movies or something.

STAFFORD: They're just at the top of that flight of steps. Don't worry about the guards, they're expecting you. Just try and look professional, not like you've come from an agency or anything.

PERI: Kinda difficult to look professional the state my knees are in.

(Automatic weapons fire.)

ERIMEM: What was that?

PERI: That's some kind of ray gun.

SEYTON: Where do you think you're going, Buckingham?

STAFFORD: Damn. It's him. The King's new advisor, the man from the future.

SEYTON: You still haven't answered my question. Where are you going?

STAFFORD: I am delivering these wenches to the Princes, to, to make their stay more bearable.

SEYTON: I fancy you are delivering assassins to make their stay bearable by cutting it short.

STAFFORD: I don't know what you mean.

SEYTON: Oh, come, come, Buckingham. There's no point denying it. I just want to talk to you.

STAFFORD: You must be joking. Talk? The moment I step round this corner, you'll fry me as sure as if I were condemned as a warlock and knee-deep in faggots.

SEYTON: I take your point. Look, there you are. It's on the floor.

STAFFORD: Yes, right down by your feet. Very handy.

(Gun slides across floor.)

SEYTON: I'll never get it over there, will I. Satisfied?

STAFFORD: All right, I'm coming out.

PERI: Don't trust him.

ERIMEM: Why?

PERI: Because I know that man. He might look different but he can change his appearance. The last time I met him, he couldn't decide whether he wanted to be a robot, a gangster, or an action figure.

ERIMEM: He's an enemy of the Doctor, then.

PERI: The worst kind.

STAFFORD: I have no reason to trust him either, but we can't stay here all day. All right, I'm coming out.

(footsteps) All right, Seyton, so you know. What of it? I do what I do as a patriot. I do it for my country.

SEYTON: (laughs) You're doing it for yourself. Now what's in that little brain of yours? Kill the boys and blame Richard for it? Get the Woodvilles to depose him for you so you can scuttle onto the empty throne like a hermit crab?

STAFFORD: There's nothing wrong with having a career plan.

SEYTON: Look, it may come as a surprise to you, but I want them dead too.

STAFFORD: You?

SEYTON: I've been trying to persuade the King to kill them for the past six months!

STAFFORD: So you say. You could be trying to trap me.

SEYTON: The only difference is that I want Richard to get his own hands bloody. Let him give the order to murder them. Let the people know beyond the shadow of a doubt that he killed them, and you will have your English Revolution.

STAFFORD: Why are you doing this? What's in it for you?

SEYTON: I have my reasons. Look, does it matter? The point is, isn't my way better? I've filled Richard's head with dire portents from the future if they live. If the Princes prove to be trouble, if they attempt to escape, I think I can convince Richard that they are a clear and present danger and that they need to be removed.

STAFFORD: All right, what do we do now?

SEYTON: Tell your wenches the plan has changed. Let them think they're rescuing the Princes, and when they try, we raise the alarm and arrest them all.

STAFFORD: There will be a strong possibility that if the wenches are captured, the King would torture and execute them for treason. He's funny like that.

RICHARD: I didn't kill them, though. No reason to.

DOCTOR: Why should I believe you and not Buckingham?

RICHARD: He's a turncoat and traitor. I'm not. I'm not.

DOCTOR: And yet you're standing there wearing someone else's crown. What's the difference?

RICHARD: Loyalty. Duty to others, not just to one's self. That's the difference between me and him. And the most important thing of all.

DOCTOR: What's that?
RICHARD: He lost. That's why what's left of him is chained to that wall.
DOCTOR: Well done. You must be so proud.
RICHARD: He was prepared to kill your friends. As soon as it suited him, he was prepared to do it.
DOCTOR: As you would.
RICHARD: If I did it, I'd do it for the greater good. He'd do it out of his own ambition.
DOCTOR: Not much difference to the outcome, is there? They'd still be dead.
RICHARD: Well, you know what they say. The story changes, the ending stays the same.
DOCTOR: What did you say?

SEYTON: And if the wenches get killed, so much the better. They won't incriminate either of us if they're dead.
PERI: Er, guys.
STAFFORD: Good point. That's a very good plan.
PERI: Hello?
STAFFORD: Mind you, if all goes well, we shouldn't have anyone to answer to.
PERI: Guys?
SEYTON + STAFFORD: What?
PERI: We can actually hear every word you say.
STAFFORD: Really?
PERI: Yes.
SEYTON: Okay, change of plan. Let's kill them now.
STAFFORD: What a good plan.
(Running feet.)

ERIMEM: (breathless) Down here.
PERI: Okay.
ERIMEM: Can you hear anything?
PERI: I think we lost them.
ERIMEM: Peri, why did you tell them that we could hear them?
PERI: Well, I er... Oh, eavesdropping seemed rude.
ERIMEM: I swear, Peri, sometimes you are as unfathomable as the sphinx herself.
PERI: Quiet.
(Running feet go past.)
PERI: Where are we?
ERIMEM: We're in trouble?
PERI: Oh, thanks for that, Hiawatha.
ERIMEM: I think, no, wait, I'm pretty sure we've run right round the courtyard and we're back where we started.
PERI: If you mean the Princes are...
ERIMEM: They're at the top of those stairs. Come on.
PERI: Wait a minute.
ERIMEM: What?
PERI: Whatever we find in there, let's not jump to conclusions.
ERIMEM: What do you mean?
PERI: I mean, let's not get any ideas about sacrificing anybody before we know the facts.
ERIMEM: But that is what we are meant to do.
PERI: I know what we're *meant* to do, and if the Doctor were here he would agree with me.
ERIMEM: And that is?
PERI: Isn't it obvious? The Master's substituting historical figures for robots, and it's our job to stop him perverting the course of history. That's our job. Not to go round killing kids. Come on, let's get to it.
ERIMEM: (sotto) I've got to hand it to you, Peri. What you lack in subtlety you make up for in certainty.
(Door opens.)
PERI: There's no one here.
ERIMEM: Someone was here. There are clothes on the bed, the jug has water in it. Someone's used this room quite recently.
PERI: Someone human.
RICHARD: So, there you are. The wandering wenches return. You seem surprised. As I asked for you to be brought here, it'd be rude not to welcome you.
PERI: Rude? You brought us at sword-point to the Tower of London and informed us that we're going to be waiting hand and foot on some boys in a draughty tower. Why on Earth would you think you're being rude?
RICHARD: Oh, bless you no, that's not the reason I've brought you here. That was a, what would you call it? A pretext. You can relax. I've not brought you here to be servants.

PERI: Well, that's a relief.

RICHARD: I've actually brought you here to kill you. Sorry about that.

RICHARD: Why would I kill your friends?

DOCTOR: Why would a King need a reason?

RICHARD: Good point. I'll let you have that one. Let me broaden it out and ask you a hypothetical question. Why would a good a loyal kinsman suddenly declare himself King, and usurp and kill his beloved brother's nephews. Under what circumstances would he do that? What on Earth would possess him?

DOCTOR: You tell me.

RICHARD: No, Doctor. Indulge me. You tell me.

DOCTOR: I really don't know.

RICHARD: Try me.

DOCTOR: To avoid having an inexperienced minor on the throne, perhaps. Keep stability in the court.

RICHARD: Oh, come on. You can do better than that. Edward's, I mean, this hypothetical prince, he's young, but he's not that young. Go on, Doctor. Have another go.

DOCTOR: Well...

RICHARD: Say it. Go on, we're both thinking it.

DOCTOR: Well, to become King, obviously. For power.

RICHARD: No, never thought about it. Never wanted it. Not interested.

DOCTOR: You could just be saying that.

RICHARD: This man loved his brother. He faced thinner times than this and he didn't desert him. You think he's capable of turning round in a few months and murdering his brother's kids in cold blood? Does everyone really think that? Do they?

DOCTOR: If, as you say, this King is hypothetical, then no one can, can they?

RICHARD: Oh, well done. Two nil to the Time Lord chained to the wall.

DOCTOR: It's my turn to ask you a hypothetical question now.

RICHARD: Go on, be my guest.

DOCTOR: There's a King, a King of a primitive age, an age of swords, skins and beaten metal, yet he knows far more than he should about the future, about other worlds. How would he know this?

RICHARD: Oh, that one's easy.

DOCTOR: Is it?

RICHARD: Someone tells him, of course.

STAFFORD: I can't see them. They could have doubled back on us. What do we do now?

SEYTON: Do? We don't do anything. Your part of this little story ends here.

STAFFORD: What?

SEYTON: I've delayed you long enough. Now it's time for you to retake the stage and act out the part history has written for you.

STAFFORD: I don't understand you.

STAFFORD [recording]: The country is ripe for uprising, and the Woodvilles are the only family that are powerful enough to even attempt it.

SEYTON: I've already sent word to the King. Some minion has breathlessly informed him that you are behind a plot to use the Princes as figureheads for rebellion. Disgraced, you will be forced to flee to Wales, Richard will be persuaded that the Princes are too dangerous to live, and will hopefully trump up a few charges to execute them publically. All very satisfying.

STAFFORD: I could go and tell...

SEYTON: You could, but he won't believe you. You're like a fly in amber, Henry, crushed inside the pages of a history book like a flattened flower. Your insignificant fate is to betray the King and to lose your head on a block of wood in Salisbury. Off you go then, Henry Stafford, 2nd Duke of Buckingham. Fulfil your drab, pointless, destiny.

STAFFORD: You seem to know everything, don't you, Mister Soothsayer. You foresee all.

SEYTON: I have certain advantages. Think of it as a privilege I'm telling you about what is to come.

STAFFORD: I'm honoured. Let me return the privilege. I foresee you limping in the very near future.

SEYTON: Hmm? (weapons fire) Ow! Ow!

STAFFORD: Little tip. Dropping your weapon on the ground to prove your good faith, good plan. Not keeping an eye on who picks it up again, bad plan.

WARDERS: There he is!

DOCTOR: Peri and Erimem wouldn't betray the future.

RICHARD: Of course they wouldn't. To be fair to them, I did torture them quite extensively.

DOCTOR: What?

RICHARD: Just kidding.

DOCTOR: That wasn't very funny.

RICHARD: Well, I don't do jokes. Just ask Bucko over there.

DOCTOR: A bit difficult, as you tortured him and left him to die.

RICHARD: Ah, I take it by your tone you don't approve. I'm surprised.

DOCTOR: Surprised? That anyone can feel anything for the suffering of others? You call yourself a King? You should be ashamed of yourself. This man is dead due to your neglect.

RICHARD: And that's a bad thing, is it?

DOCTOR: How can you even ask that?

RICHARD: But that's my job, isn't it? To kill him. He betrays me, I kill him. That's the way the story goes.

DOCTOR: You can't hide behind fate. You made the original decision, and Time holds you to it. There is such a thing as free will, you know.

RICHARD: Is there? Well, permit me to test a theory. Bucko? Bucko, me boy? Still alive? Wakey, wakey, rise and shine.

(Stafford groans.)

RICHARD: Well, who'd have thought it. He's still kicking. Well, well. So here's the thing. I've had an attack of conscience. I've decided to repent. I'll let him go. That all right? You just have to say the word. Would you like me to let him go? Go on, ask me. Ask me to let him go. Of course you can't, because that'd be wrong, wouldn't it? He's meant to die, isn't he? You wouldn't permit me to do anything else, would you?

DOCTOR: I am not the architect of your life.

RICHARD: Oh no, I wouldn't say architect. More like a god. You see past, present, and future, and make sure we all act according to the rules. In fact, you're worse than a god. At least a god allows his subjects to repent.

(Door opens, Clarrie coughing.)

JUDITH: And where have you been?

CLARRIE: Ye Gods, you frightened the wits out of me.

JUDITH: I thought your wits had been flushed out of you years ago. Where have you been?

CLARRIE: I er... to answer a call of nature round the back.

SUSAN: He's lying.

CLARRIE: How dare you. How could you say such a thing.

JUDITH: Cos you normally do it out your bedroom window.

CLARRIE: All right, you got me there.

SUSAN: Where's the Doctor?

CLARRIE: Is he not in his room.

SUSAN: You know he's not. Oh, Clarrie, we liked him.

JUDITH: Did you have to do everything *he* asks of you?

CLARRIE: Well, what was I supposed to do? He knew the Doctor was going to turn up. Written proof in his hand, he had. There's no point in lying about it to him.

JUDITH: I hope you can sleep at night, that's all.

CLARRIE: Well, if I can't, there's always drink-induced comas. I find them just as relaxing. Blood's thicker than water, girls. You know that.

JUDITH: Yeah, we know.

SUSAN: We've only got to look at the relatives to know how thick it can get.

JUDITH: He's probably been taken to the Tower by now.

SUSAN: That's it, then.

JUDITH: Looks like it.

SUSAN: He might have one hope. Say someone takes it upon themselves to rescue him.

JUDITH: Not very likely, is it? It'd have to be someone who knows the layout of the Tower and has a good idea of where the secret entrances are.

SUSAN: You mean an entrance that might be able to be reached via the river Thames.

JUDITH: Something like that. Only someone with inside info would have a hope of doing anything like that.

SUSAN: I know. What are the chances of that happening?

JUDITH: We still got that old row boat moored down in Greenwich?

DOCTOR: You never answered my question. Where did this King get his foreknowledge?

RICHARD: Relax, Doctor. Your friends didn't tell me a dicky bird, mainly because I didn't know they had anything to tell until about a week back. That's when I found those letters of yours. Now they were useful. Thanks for letting me know when you were turning up.

DOCTOR: Where are the girls now?

RICHARD: Enough of them. Now, you did ask where this King found out about the future. That's the bonus of being an historical celebrity and a notorious villain. I've had all the tourists and rubber-neckers turn up to gawp at me since I was knee-high to a peasant. Little green men and big blue fellows with silly hats and machines round their necks, claiming they're on holiday, and they're from this century or that century. Most of them had two things in common. Do you know what they were?

DOCTOR: No.

RICHARD: Firstly, they all had very strong views on whether I should kill my nephews or not. I was a bit taken aback, seeing as it had never entered my head to do anything to 'em. Not when I was 12, anyway.

DOCTOR: That's time travel for you. And the second thing?

RICHARD: They were all afraid of you.

DOCTOR: Me?

RICHARD: It happened by chance, really, when one of these things turned up early on. I was just a young lad at that time, living in the old castle in Middleham, and this creature was startled by a scream. It was just old Doctor Grey tending my father's battle wounds for the umpteenth time. I told this bloke that it was a doctor looking after things, and this thing jumped out of his skin and cleared off pronto. After that, it got so the minute they opened their mouths for the usual blah about the future, I just mentioned that the Doctor was in the vicinity and they'd disappear. Well of course I wanted to know more about who this Doctor was.

DOCTOR: Naturally.

RICHARD: So I waited until someone else from the future turned up, someone who knew you, then I'd string them along a bit, humour them, then stick them somewhere dark and nasty and torture them until they told me all about you.

RICHARD: Why, you're limping, Mister Seyton. I hope that's a genuine limp and you're not just taking the rise out of me. I've had enough of that with Bucko.

SEYTON: I was wounded in the course of my patriotic duty, your Majesty. I mean no offence.

RICHARD: Of course you don't. Mister Tyrell?

TYRELL: Sire?

RICHARD: Make sure his limp's genuine.

TYRELL: Sire.

(Crack. Seyton screams.)

TYRELL: It's genuine.

RICHARD: Good. So, now what have you to tell us? I got a garbled account of treachery, treason and the like.

SEYTON: My Lord, it's Buckingham. He and those two wenches. There was a plot to rescue the Princes. I tried to stop them, as you can see.

RICHARD: Dear me. How disappointing. Wasn't like this in the old days, you know. Oh no. Then there was respect. Time was you could go off to the Crusades, leave your portcullis open, and your kingdom would still be there when you got back home ten years later.

SEYTON: Sire, if we hurry, we can catch them.

RICHARD: Oh, I wouldn't worry about that.

SEYTON: But I do think this incident does underline my argument about removing the problem of the Princes.

RICHARD: I have actually been thinking about what you've advised me for the last six months. You put a pretty persuasive argument, and you'll be pleased to know that I've finally decided to give serious thought to your advice and to act upon it.

SEYTON: Your Majesty.

RICHARD: Yes, I've decided to execute you for treason.

SEYTON: Your Majesty?

RICHARD: Mister Tyrell, take him away and do unpleasant things to him, would you? I suggest you favour his right leg first.

SEYTON: No. But Sire, I beg of you, no, please (dragged away) I've served you well, Sire. Your Majesty, no.

TYRELL: This way. This way.

RICHARD: And lo and behold, enter my advisor Seyton, arriving in his little box. Attempting with all his fawning and charm to manipulate me, and all the while I was pulling his strings.

DOCTOR: What did this Seyton look like?

RICHARD: Tall, dark, completely dressed in black. Nasty pointy little beard. Air of smug superiority. I think you know him, Doctor, because he certainly knows you.

DOCTOR: I think I have a shrewd idea.

RICHARD: He told me what a straight arrow you were, and how you'd stop his little plan. Oh, says I, so he'd have stopped your little plan to kill the Princes. Then he got cagey, then I got puzzled. Then I hurt him a bit, then I found out everything.

PERI: So what are you going to do, run us through with a sword or are you just going to do it with your bare hands?

RICHARD: No, we have to wait here for the properly licenced executioner. Couple of years ago it's be just a wild stab in the dark, but now it's all forms to fill in and executioner's fees to pay, heads to put on pikes.

ERIMEM: Yes, we get the idea. Killing sounds like a complicated business.

RICHARD: Oh, you wouldn't believe. It's murder sometimes. So, while we're waiting for some lackey to come and top you, what shall we talk about in the meantime?

ERIMEM: You still haven't told us why you're going to kill us.

RICHARD: Well, you know too much, obviously.

PERI: Oh. You mean about the robots?

RICHARD: What?

PERI: That surprised you, didn't it. Don't try to act all innocent. You've got some deal with the Master going on so you can take over the planet, just admit it.

RICHARD: Is your friend all right in the head? Cos I've got a doctor who can drill a hole in it if you want.

ERIMEM: I don't think another hole in her head would be a good idea. We've got enough trouble with the one under her nose.

PERI: Oh don't act so dumb, Mister So-Called King. Looking at you, I wouldn't be surprised if you're not battery-operated and come with a twelve month warranty.

RICHARD: (laughing) Wait a minute. You don't know, do you. Oh, what are you talking about? Oh, that is priceless. You two are priceless! You don't know. You were there, and you haven't got the faintest idea what's going on! Oh, fantastic! Don't bother about the execution, you're fine. You're absolutely fine. You know, perhaps I can find a use for you two after all.

RICHARD: So I tortured him. That's when I found out about this Web of Time thing.

DOCTOR: Seyton, what happened to him?

RICHARD: Oh, nothing much. The usual... well, what have we here? Are these bits of pottery yours? Commemorating the happy coronation of Edward the Fifth, King of England, on this day the 24th of June 1483. Oh, that would have been a good bash. Shame how fate makes things turn out.

DOCTOR: Oh, it's fate now. Is this another attempt to wriggle out of responsibility for your own actions?

RICHARD: We have exactly the same dilemma, you and me.

DOCTOR: I sincerely doubt that.

RICHARD: Oh yes. Civilisation as we know it is hanging in the balance, and we have to sort it out. But sadly, there's some as get killed along the way. But you can't stop, you can't worry about them. Who knows, perhaps their deaths might even be useful in the grand scheme of things.

DOCTOR: That is a ridiculous argument. You can't equate your own petty political ambitions with events which threaten the nature of existence.

RICHARD: That's exactly what I'm doing.

(Knock on door.)

TYRELL: All right, your Majesties? You ready?

PERI + ERIMEM [OC]: No!

TYRELL: It's always women and young men who take the longest to get ready. I might have known that both combined would take double the time.

ERIMEM: I can't find it anywhere. Where is it?

PERI: Where's what?

ERIMEM: My tunic. Have you seen it?

PERI: No

ERIMEM: How do you know for sure? You could be wearing mine.

PERI: No, they're not identical. For starters, my tunic doesn't have white powder caked around the collar, like the one on the chest over there.

ERIMEM: Oh, you're right. Urgh, it's disgusting. I do hate us pretending to be boys. Every week I have to put this powder on my face. Look at my skin, it's dry and flaky. I was not meant to look this pale.

PERI: You think you've got problems. How would you like strapping these things down every week? Have you seen the red marks left after I take the bindings off? I look like a waffle. Look at this wig. It's getting really tatty. I feel like Elton John

RICHARD: For the moment we have two kids in the Tower, still alive. They shouldn't be there by rights. If I am what my reputation says I am, i.e. a conniving black-hearted villain, I want them dead. And if you are what your reputation says you are, i.e. an heroic protector of the Web of Time, you want them dead too. Stop me if I'm going too fast.

DOCTOR: No, it's all very clear.

RICHARD: You wrote, PS don't try to find out who killed the Princes on your own. These are dangerous times. Do you really want to know who killed them? I'll let you into a little secret. You do. You kill 'em.

DOCTOR: I think I know where this is leading.

RICHARD: Good. I like a quick learner. I'm making it your choice. I'm allowing you to do the right thing. I'm letting you win.

PERI: If we're playing tennis today, then I think by rights you should let me win.

ERIMEM: Why?

PERI: Well, I am meant to be Edward. As the future King...

ERIMEM: Deposed.

PERI: As an ex-future King...

ERIMEM: Illegitimate.

PERI: Okay. As a bastardised and usurped ex-future King, I think it's only fair I should win the odd match.

ERIMEM: You should concentrate on your forehand.

PERI: That's what I always say to myself, the moment I go to sleep at nights. I'm stranded five hundred years out of time, held in the Bloody Tower, and being forced to act as an historical figure who by all accounts is already dead, and all that keeps me awake in the wee hours is the state of my forehand.

(Door opens.)

TYRELL: You sent for me, Sire?

RICHARD: Ah, Mister Tyrell. Glad you could join us.

DOCTOR: Wish I could say the same.

(Door closes.)

RICHARD: Oh hush. Now, Sir James, I've granted the Doctor leave to be our King for the day.

TYRELL: Our what?

DOCTOR: Your what?

RICHARD: He's going to order you to execute our two young friends in the Tower.

TYRELL: Our two... what?

RICHARD: Yes, them.

TYRELL: Right. What?

RICHARD: If he doesn't order you to execute them, then his silence will be your order to let them go.

TYRELL: To let them...?

RICHARD: Go. Yes. Did you get that?

(Bird singing, tennis match.)

ERIMEM: I wonder. What happened to the real Princes?

PERI: His Majesty's probably killed them. Thirty love. My point, I believe.

ERIMEM: Can we change ends yet? The sun's in my eyes.

PERI: No chance. You're always going on about people worshipping the sun. I'm sure if you pray enough it'll go behind a cloud just for you.

RICHARD: Just do as the Doctor asks. He is Lord God Almighty and his word is law. All right? So, Doctor, the ball's in your court.

PERI: My service, I believe.

ERIMEM: But I'm still curious about what happened.

PERI: I'm not. What's done is done. We just carry on. There's no point worrying.

DOCTOR: I can't change anything.

RICHARD: Yes, you can.

ERIMEM: You've changed your tune.

PERI: What choice have we got?

RICHARD: Then your choice is simple, isn't it?

PERI: It's easy to adapt when there's no hope. What's done is done. Time's moved on.

DOCTOR: I will not be party to this.

RICHARD: Hedge and bluster, Doctor, you are party to this. Come on, time's running out. Literally. There it goes. Tick tock, tick tock. Tick. Tock. Tick. Tock.

PERI: I'd rather concentrate on getting out of this mess. He should have turned up by now.

ERIMEM: He has. He's here!

PERI: Where?

ERIMEM: The Doctor, over there, on that hill!

PERI: I can't see. The sun's in my eyes.

ERIMEM: There! Doctor! With those people.

PERI: God, yes! Doctor!

RICHARD: Last chance, Doctor. He can't be squeamish here. It's for the greater good.

ERIMEM: Doctor!

PERI: Doctor! Doctor!

RICHARD: He can't afford to be weak. He can't have a picture in your head of those two poor defenceless brothers crying out for mercy.

ERIMEM: Doctor!

PERI: I don't believe it. He's going. Doctor!!

ERIMEM: It's too late.

PERI: Doctor! Oh, typical. He's only gone without us for two years, and he gets himself new companions.

DOCTOR: I suppose you're right. I do have to do the right thing, don't I.

RICHARD: Good man.

DOCTOR: Mister Tyrell.

TYRELL: Sire.

DOCTOR: Would you be so kind and go to the Tower, and let my two companions free, please?

TYRELL: He guessed.

RICHARD: Oh, shut up, Tyrell.

DOCTOR: You almost had me fooled for a moment, but you reminded me of something that's been bothering me. Your disreputable landlord friend who chats to kings on street corners? It was nagging at the back of my mind and then you said brothers. Just then it hit me. Buckingham wasn't the only person you saved from the executioner's block, was it? Clarrie, Clarence. You rescued your treacherous brother George, Duke of Clarence. It all fell into place after that. What happened to the Princes, where my friends are. Like you, your Majesty, I know everything.

TYRELL: What is he talking about?

RICHARD: He's raving. Don't worry about it.

TYRELL: But the Duke of Clarence was executed.

RICHARD: It doesn't matter. You heard the Doctor. Go and release his friends from the Tower, before you take their place. Well, go on then.

(Door opens and closes.)

DOCTOR: Tricking me to order the death of my friends to save everything, how amusing.

RICHARD: Just my little joke.

DOCTOR: You don't do jokes, as I recall.

RICHARD: No, you're right. I don't. I just wanted you, Mister Keeper of the Web of Time, to feel trapped by fate for a change, just like I have me whole life.

DOCTOR: Hardly trapped. You rescued your brother after he'd been condemned to death.

RICHARD: He wasn't malicious. He was an idiot. It was the Woodvilles forced Eddie into sentencing him to death. He didn't deserve to die for treason.

DOCTOR: And Buckingham? Did he?

RICHARD: Blood's thicker than water, Doctor. You know that.

PERI: He must have tried to look for us.

ERIMEM: It's been two days now. It's too late for the Doctor to help us now. Time is against us. Every day we spend here we risk doing damage to the Web of Time.

PERI: According to my notes, the Princes weren't seen by anyone beyond 1484.

ERIMEM: Exactly! Every day we stay here, we become part of a... what did the Doctor call it? A new timeline which usurps the old. And that cannot be taken back, ever.

PERI: There's nothing we can do.

ERIMEM: There is a way for us to leave this place, of sorts.

PERI: How?

ERIMEM: I still have the poison draught that Buckingham gave us.

PERI: Really?

ERIMEM: Yes.

PERI: And?

ERIMEM: He said it would be quick and painless.

PERI: What? Erimem, you're insane.

ERIMEM: No, Peri, I'm not. I just see things differently from you.

PERI: You're saying we should kill ourselves, that you're prepared to kill me?

ERIMEM: That's the difference. The difference between life and death is not a huge thing. It's just a different stop on a journey.

PERI: Don't come any closer.

ERIMEM: Peri, I do love you. You have been the most dearest friend I ever had. The time I've spent in the Tardis has been the happiest of my entire life. I'm truly sorry this has to happen to both of us. Maybe, in the next life, I will have time to explain it to you properly.

PERI: You're joking. Please, tell me you're joking.

ERIMEM: 'Cause I'm joking! Can you imagine me suggesting such a thing?

PERI: I nearly had a heart attack.

ERIMEM: Your face was a picture.

PERI: Never do that again.

ERIMEM: I was going to suggest we open our minds and perhaps the opportunity to leave this place will present it to us.

PERI: Erimem, you seriously think we should sit here chanting Om long enough and some guys are going to come and open the door and say

(Door opens.)

TYRELL: All right, ladies. Pack your things, you're free to go. Order of the King.

PERI + ERIMEM: Wow!

PERI: Our minds must really be open to opportunity.

TYRELL: Now if you'll just follow... (weapons fire) Argh! (thud)

ERIMEM: On the other hand.

SEYTON: Well, this is a surprise. Mistress Peri and Erimem, isn't it? The Doctor's companions, I hear.

PERI: You know very well who I am.

SEYTON: Shall we go and find him? I do so love reunions.

PERI: A nasty man is pointing a ray gun at us. I do believe this is where we came in, Erimem.

CLARRIE: God, that was easy. I was expecting it to be locked.

JUDITH: Hello, Doctor. You're looking well.

SUSAN: Still with the right number of limbs? That's always a good sign. Well done.

DOCTOR: Hello you three. Where did you spring from?

JUDITH: Nothing broken?

DOCTOR: Only my collector's item souvenir mug.

JUDITH: Oh, that's all right. We've got thousands of collector's items.

SUSAN: Oh yes, only way to keep up with demand from punters who want to buy rare stuff.

RICHARD: Well, well, well. Hello, Clarence.

CLARRIE: Oh, fudge. Er, well, look, it's the King. Fancy meeting you here.

RICHARD: It's all right, the Doctor's guessed everything. Clever chap. Is this by any chance a daring rescue attempt? That's unlike you, brother.

CLARRIE: Well, I had this profound spiritual moment which precipitated a complete change of heart. And besides, he hasn't paid me for his room yet.

JUDITH: We put him up to it.

CLARRIE: They didn't want you to kill the Doctor so I thought...

RICHARD: Funny. I was just about to let him go. I'm disappointed, George. You of all people should know me better than that.

CLARRIE: Well, I had a suspicion.

RICHARD: I always do what has to be done, but I don't kill without good reason. Off you go, Doctor. Pick up your companions and go with my blessing.

DOCTOR: I have one question before I go, if I may. Are you going to use your knowledge of the future to change the present? I have to ask, you see. It might prove embarrassing later if there's a messy incident and they ask me awkward questions at the enquiry.

RICHARD: If you've guessed everything, Doctor, you'll know I can't do much if I wanted to. Events have brought us all here, and I'm fully prepared to die an honourable death on Bosworth battlefield. If that's my fate, so be it. I've no surprises left in my life.

MEN: Do not move. You will remain here.

DOCTOR: Then again, there's always room for a few more surprises.

JUDITH: There's something wrong with those men. Their voices are wrong.

CLARRIE: They sound like my regulars.

DOCTOR: Low level hypnotic field generated by a device behind the ear.

JUDITH: Who's doing this?

RICHARD: He knows, don't you, Doctor.

DOCTOR: Yes, unfortunately. No doubt he will make himself known in due course in the most theatrical, over the top way imaginable.

PERI: Doctor!

DOCTOR: Peri! Erimem! At last. Are you two all right?

ERIMEM: We're fine.

SEYTON: Doctor. So, we meet again.
DOCTOR: Well, well. I thought as much.
PERI: I knew it. I just knew it. He's changed his appearance somehow, something to do with Kamelion, but you can tell who it is. Just look at him.
DOCTOR: Peri...
PERI: Erimem, allow me to introduce you to the Doctor's nastiest and deadliest enemy, the Master.
DOCTOR: Peri, that's not the Master.
PERI: He's not the Master?
SEYTON: Who's the Master?
DOCTOR: Peri, Erimem, and all those present. Allow me to introduce you to Mister William Shakespeare.

[Part Four]

PERI: William Shakespeare?
SHAKESPEARE: (Brummy accent) That's me, love.
PERI: *The* William Shakespeare?
SHAKESPEARE: Yes.
PERI: You're sure he's not the Master?
DOCTOR: Oh come, Peri. Are you telling me you don't recognise your planet's most renowned playwright? I do apologise on her behalf, Billy. She's American.
SHAKESPEARE: Oh.
DOCTOR: Not good with culture.
SHAKESPEARE: No, not *the* Master, my dear, just a master of words. Oh, and a master of the dramatic arts. Oh, and poetry. Yes, I think that about covers it.
DOCTOR: Modest as ever.
PERI: He's got a ray gun, for crying out loud. Playwrights from the 16th century don't normally carry ray guns. Where'd you get that from?
DOCTOR: The Cyber-rifle? Probably the same place as those Dalek control relays stuck behind the ears of these men. From the Tardis, of course. He's been rummaging around my ship for the past couple of years, picking up all sorts of unsavoury memorabilia, haven't you?
PERI: The Tardis? He's got the Tardis?
DOCTOR: Of course. He hitched a lift with us. How else do you think he got here? I'm more interested as to why he bothered.
SHAKESPEARE: Why? You're asking me why? Huh, I'd have thought it was obvious. It's all your fault, Doctor.
DOCTOR: My fault?
SHAKESPEARE: Unless you've forgotten, you are the one who told me about the future. About that time 400 years hence.
DOCTOR: Ah, I see now. I told him when people questioned what motives Richard could possibly have had for killing the Princes, and suspicion turns to Henry Tudor.
SHAKESPEARE: I'm a playwright, Doctor, and I'm an actor, but above all else, I'm a patriot. I'm loyal to my Queen. The thought of her proud lineage being blamed for such a heinous crime that they could be pilloried and condemned centuries from now as a family of child-murderers, oh, well it doesn't bear thinking about, does it. So when you mentioned that you were planning to come back to the 15th century I took advantage of your complete inability to hold your drink, hid in your ship, inveigled myself in Richard's court, and did my level best to suggest to him that it might be useful to kill the Princes in a way that future generations would never doubt his guilt.
DOCTOR: Billy, after all I've told you about the consequences of interfering with history, about if ever Time got out of joint someone should always set it right, I cannot believe you would even contem... what do you mean, I can't hold my drink?
SHAKESPEARE: Let me put it this way. This is the first time when trying to get someone drunk I was able to spike their ale with ginger beer.
DOCTOR: Ginger pop has a profoundly deleterious effect on any Time Lord metabolism. Just ask anyone.
ERIMEM: So it was you. You got Richard to kill the Princes.
RICHARD: Did he heck. I had this jumped-up quill pusher sussed from the start.
SHAKESPEARE: It could have worked, in time.
RICHARD: Oh yeah. In time. And in time I might start to fancy Louis the Eleventh of France. But I put it to you that two years later I'll still think him a bug-eyed, pointy-nosed, garlic-eating backstabber. Why didn't you just kill them when you got here, and torture me till I signed a confession? That's what I would have done.
JUDITH: Excuse me. What about us?
SHAKESPEARE: What?
SUSAN: Well, we've been sitting here for a while listening to you, and we don't understand any of this stuff. Can we go now?

SHAKESPEARE: And who might you be?

SUSAN: Us? Just serving wenches.

JUDITH: That's right, just serving wenches. We deliver food to the prisoners.

SUSAN: Prisoners. That's right.

SHAKESPEARE: Funny, I was a prisoner in one of those cells until two days ago. I don't remember getting any food served to me by wenches. It was always hurled at me by disdainful guards.

SUSAN: Ah.

JUDITH: Yes, it's quite a recent thing. You see, they found the old spitting in the food system wasn't working properly.

SUSAN: You know how it is. One prisoner's food doesn't get spat in at all.

JUDITH: Another prisoner's food ends up swimming in sputum. It's just a recipe for anarchy.

SHAKESPEARE: And what about him?

CLARRIE: Who, me? Er...

JUDITH: He's the chief gobber.

CLARRIE: That's right. (spits) There you are, one for free.

SHAKESPEARE: Ye gods. All right, off you go. Er, just a minute.

SUSAN: Yes, sire?

SHAKESPEARE: You don't seem to have brought them any food.

SUSAN: Oh. That's right.

JUDITH: Yes.

SUSAN: Well spotted.

JUDITH: Yes.

SUSAN: That's right.

JUDITH: The prisoners are being starved, as punishment.

SUSAN: Yes, and...

CLARRIE: And they brought me here to gob at them.

JUDITH: That's right. Just because they're not eating doesn't mean the system stops working.

SHAKESPEARE: Coo. I think the prisoners would be relieved when the branding irons were brought in. Fine, off you go then. (door closes.) Right, you lot.

MAN: Come on, get on your feet.

DOCTOR: Where are we going?

SHAKESPEARE: Not far. There's been a bit of a change in my plans.

RICHARD: Don't tell me. You're going to pretend to ask for my autograph, and when you unfold the bit of paper it'll really be a signed confession that I killed the Princes.

SHAKESPEARE: Heh, heh, heh, not exactly. When I discovered the Doctor had turned up, I came up with something else. Why bother trying to manufacture historical evidence when I can go one better?

RICHARD: Oh yeah?

SHAKESPEARE: The Doctor's gonna take us to my time, one hundred years in the future, where you can stand trial for your crimes in person in the court of Queen Elizabeth!

MAN: Move.

RICHARD: I'm annoyed now. Could have sworn I'd had him executed.

DOCTOR: He doesn't seem very executed to me.

RICHARD: Oh, hang on, I remember now. When you turned up I told the jailer I had no further use for our Mister Seyton, I'd like to dispense with his services, get rid of him for me please. Instead of running him through, this silly sod must have released him.

DOCTOR: That'll teach you. Never go in for melodramatic language when you're talking to the staff. They might take you literally.

RICHARD: If you want something doing, you'd better do it yourself.

(Door opens.)

PERI: The Tardis!

DOCTOR: Safe and well with all the fixtures and fittings intact, I hope. I do hope he didn't leave the taps running. Leela always did that. Floods the arboretum on the level below.

SHAKESPEARE: You two wait here. If anyone tries to leave, kill 'em.

MAN: Yes, master.

RICHARD: You see? Kill them. Economical, simple, straight forward. Why didn't I say that in the first place?

SHAKESPEARE: How long will this journey take?

DOCTOR: For you, Billy, I'll make a girdle round the Earth in forty minutes.

SHAKESPEARE: If you're going to insist on using my material, Doctor, I have to give you fair warning that I have very good lawyers. After I wrote Titus Andronicus I managed to obtain copyright over the whole Roman Empire.

PERI: What?

SHAKESPEARE: Don't worry, I was very responsible. I never let them get presented as figures of fun. Right, before we leave, your Majesty, the Princes if you please.

RICHARD: Sorry?

SHAKESPEARE: Where are they, the Princes?

RICHARD: Come again?

SHAKESPEARE: Oh, don't try to be clever. A trial isn't a trial without evidence, is it. You must have done something with them. You wouldn't substitute them with these lovely maidens if you hadn't done away with them. The bodies must be somewhere, stands to reason. Where are they?

RICHARD: You wouldn't believe me if I told you.

SHAKESPEARE: I'm not playing games.

RICHARD: Neither am I.

SHAKESPEARE: Look, just tell me. What did you do with the Princes?

RICHARD: I'm telling you, I didn't...

SHAKESPEARE: Tell me!

RICHARD: There were never any Princes.

SHAKESPEARE: What?

RICHARD: You heard me.

SHAKESPEARE: Of course there were Princes. There were birth certificates, people saw them, educated them.

PERI: I knew it. Robots. I told you.

ERIMEM: Peri, don't be silly.

PERI: Doctor, he was definitely artificial. A bit of him came off in my hand.

DOCTOR: Oh really? Which bit?

PERI: I'd rather not tell you which bit.

DOCTOR: It's important.

PERI: That's what all the boys say.

DOCTOR: Ah. That bit. I see what might have happened. Tell me, why do you think Richard got you to pretend that you were the Princes?

ERIMEM: He needed us as decoys, to keep people thinking that the Princes were still alive, living in the Tower.

DOCTOR: But why you? Why not some callow youths from the royal court? Why not a couple of page boys?

PERI: Well, mmm.

ERIMEM: I understand.

PERI: What?

ERIMEM: Because we're ideal.

PERI: What? What?

DOCTOR: Exactly.

PERI: Look, I'm sick of you two nodding and winking at each other like a couple of old tramps in a musical. They were robots. A bit of him came off in my hand!

DOCTOR: I think you will find that bit is what's known as a codpiece. A special kind of codpiece.

PERI: Codpiece? Doctor, in English please, just this once.

DOCTOR: As Richard has quite correctly said, there were never any Princes. Princesses, on the other hand...

RICHARD: Oh, well done. How did you guess?

DOCTOR: It was something Clarrie said to me.

CLARRIE [memory]: They were fine. They worked here for about six months. Good workers. Shame I had to get rid of them.

DOCTOR [memory]: You did what?

CLARRIE [memory]: Only in a business sense, Doctor. Had to do a favour and hire in my (ahem) two nieces instead. Have you met them? Lovely girls. They needed a job and a place to stay, you see.

DOCTOR: Once I'd worked out that Clarrie was actually the Duke of Clarence, the identity of his brother and his two nieces who needed a place to stay was obvious.

PERI: Those two girls? The ones in the mob caps, the rosy cheeks and the frilly bosoms? They're the Princes?

DOCTOR: Sorry, Billy, old chap. You had them in your clutches and you let them go.

SHAKESPEARE: Nonsense. You're just trying to trick me. I know you and your kind, Doctor, always playing tricks with us mortals. Do I look like I've got the head of an ass?

RICHARD: If you don't believe him, then believe me. My brother knew how important it was to keep the line going for the stability of Crown and Country. When his first-born was a girl, the lovely Elizabeth, he didn't worry too much. But when the second one also turned out without the proper equipment, well, he panicked. We'd already had decades of fighting due to a feeble-minded King. It didn't bear thinking about if he didn't manage to bear sons.

ERIMEM: You could have had a Queen instead.

RICHARD: Listen, sweetheart, that might be all right where you come from, but this is a country stuffed with power-hungry nobles with their own private armies just waiting for their chance to make it their own do-it-yourself monarchy. As you can imagine, we're very particular about who we have on the throne. No dribbling imbeciles, no milksops, and no birds.

ERIMEM: That must narrow things down.

RICHARD: Anyway, my brother announced to the world that his second-born daughter was in fact a son, to stop the jitters going through the kingdom. And when his third-born was also female, he thought...

DOCTOR: Why not carry on the pretence and have two, one for the succession and one for a spare.

RICHARD: Exactly. Typical ruddy Edward, always creating messes for his little brother to clear up. I didn't even find out the truth until after he'd died. The same night these two ladies came into my life, in fact.

RICHARD: Earl Rivers is nicely tucked in for the night.

STAFFORD: That's good. I'd like to get that old crook back for all the times he's crossed me in the past.

RICHARD: What?

STAFFORD: What?

RICHARD: You just said crookback.

STAFFORD: No I didn't.

RICHARD: Yes, you did. You slipped it in there. Don't think I didn't notice. Crookback, eh? Ho, ho. You are a wag. How the long winter nights must fly by in your castle.

STAFFORD: Look, I really didn't mean to

TYRELL: My Lord.

RICHARD: We'll talk about this later. Yes?

TYRELL: I was just checking on those wenches, sire, and they seem to have done a bunk out the window.

RICHARD: Really? That's odd. I don't see why they wouldn't want to avail themselves of our hospitality. Most odd. Unless...

STAFFORD: What?

RICHARD: Unless. Oh no.

STAFFORD: Unless what?

RICHARD: Unless they were Woodville spies sent to help our new King escape.

RICHARD: Oh, it's all right. He's still here. Panic over. What's this doing on the... What the? Oh. By the

JUDITH: (drowsy) What's going on?

RICHARD: You, get up.

JUDITH: What's the meaning of this?

RICHARD: The meaning is simple. Get on your feet, your Majesty.

JUDITH: Oh, Uncle. First you remove me from my advisors then you treat me like a hostage. Make no mistake, Sir Gloucester, when I am King I'm going to miss you and your impeccable manners.

RICHARD: Young Edward, when you become King, me and my manners'll be the last thing you'll miss. (cloth rips) I see you're missing something already.

JUDITH: Ah. Would you believe it shrank in the wash?

PERI: I don't understand. Why didn't you just tell everyone what your brother had done?

RICHARD: You're joking, surely. Tell the country a beloved and dearly departed King had been playing the entire nation for a bunch of nellys? It would have torn the whole kingdom apart. There was nothing else for it. I rounded up and killed everyone who knew the truth about them.

DOCTOR: Yes. Buckingham mentioned something to that effect.

BUCKINGHAM [memory]: He went in to check on the Prince, and when he emerged his manner changed. He became twitchy, troubled, almost addled in his mind. When we got back to London he went completely loopy. He arrested many without reason, letting them go almost immediately also without cause. He executed Hastings, a loyal friend of the old King.

RICHARD: I bribed the old cow of a mother to keep quiet. She was happy to take the shilling. She was as petrified about the truth coming out as I was. And then I proclaimed them bastards, after which everyone proclaimed me much the same thing.

CLARRIE: I don't like all this going around in broad daylight. We should have gone back to the boat.

JUDITH: Are you mad, Clarrie? That's the first place they'd look. No, we just walk out like we own the place.

SUSAN: Which shouldn't be hard. I did own it for all of thirty seconds.

JUDITH: You don't regret it, do you?

SUSAN: What?

JUDITH: You know what. Getting deposed. Having to give up all the riches and the courtiers and the power for a life working in one of the filthiest pubs in London.

CLARRIE: Here, I heard that. One of the filthiest pubs in London, indeed. *The* most filthy pub in London, I'll thank you to remember.

SUSAN: Judith, to be honest, I wouldn't have had it any other way.
CLARRIE: That certificate behind the bar didn't appear out of thin air, you know.
TYRELL: ... court coming to. Ow.
CLARRIE: Sorry, sir. Didn't see you there. Ah, Sir James Tyrell. This is awkward.
TYRELL: Awkward? Why, it's... no. It's you. George, Duke of Clarence? You're dead.
SUSAN: No, everyone assumes that.
JUDITH: It's the smell.
TYRELL: Guards! Guards! Over here!
CLARRIE: Oh dear. I don't think this escaping from the Tower of London malarkey is going to be as easy as it sounds. Run for it!
JUDITH: It's no good, they're everywhere.
SUSAN: Double back, go back to the boat.
JUDITH: Too risky.
CLARRIE: I've just worked something out.
SUSAN: Oh, that's all we need.
JUDITH: We told you before, weevils will never make good bar snacks. It doesn't matter what colour you dye them.
CLARRIE: No, I've just worked out that they're actually after *me* and not you.
JUDITH: So?
CLARRIE: Ah, you're good girls, both of you. Not many of royal birth would carry a drunken man upstairs to his bed and take his boots off. Anyway, got to go. Cheerio.
SUSAN: Uncle, wait!
(Slightly distant.)
CLARRIE: Oi, you lot. Here I am. George, Duke of Clarence, at your service. Drunken traitor and licenced publican.
TYRELL: There he is. Stop him, you idiots.
JUDITH: Stupid old fool. Of all the moments to choose, why should he pick this one to start getting all heroic?
SUSAN: He's just run out of Traitor's Gate and fallen in the Thames. Come on.
JUDITH: No, he can't swim. We can't leave like this.
SUSAN: There's no point. It's the way he would have wanted to go. Trust him to find the only thing in London filthier than him.

RICHARD: When all those murdering kidnap plots started buzzing, I sent them to stay with brother George, who'd been laying low in his own filth for the past five years.
PERI: I don't get it, Doctor. Didn't Richard execute the Duke of Clarence, drown him in a vat of wine or something like that?
DOCTOR: More propaganda from our friend here. The truth is, Richard loved both his brothers, and after Clarence's rebellion he bitterly resented being ordered to execute him. Presumably he smuggled him out and hid him in an environment where he could quietly drink himself to death.
RICHARD: It's what he would have wanted.
SHAKESPEARE: But this is all a fraud. A fraud committed on this scale to engineer the succession of the Crown by the monarchy, it's unheard of. We must go back and get these girls. Their testimony alone will discredit this man throughout all time!
DOCTOR: Afraid not, William. 1597 is your stop. It's where you belong, and it's where we're dropping you off. We're here.
SHAKESPEARE: Where?
DOCTOR: Where we're requested to be, of course.

WOMAN: The nerve of some people, ruining our cultural day out.
MAN: I know.
MAN 2: Come on, let's go have a pint down at the old White Rabbit.
(The Tardis materialises.)
MAN 2: Ooo, now that's a good trick.

DOCTOR: Oh dear. Looks like the drift compensators are on the blink again. The Tardis seems to have taken the phrase all the world's a stage literally. She's just an old romantic at heart.
SHAKESPEARE: Look what you've done. You're ruining my play. You philistines, let me out of here.
(Tardis doors open.)
DOCTOR: With pleasure.

BURBAGE: Will, what the hell's going on?
SHAKESPEARE: Just go with it, Burbage. The show must go on.
BURBAGE: Er, begone, foul spirits. You will not prick my conscience like all the other spirits I have yet to

meet in act five.

SHAKESPEARE: Very good.

(Tardis door closes.)

DOCTOR: Good. Thought that would get rid of him.

PERI: You landed here on purpose.

DOCTOR: Of course. I always land everywhere on purpose. Eventually. I get our scribe out of the Tardis in his own time, which leaves us free to put our King safely back in his. Very neat, don't you think?

ERIMEM: Yes, Doctor, but don't you think that ray gun he's holding might prove a bit anachronistic?

DOCTOR: Sometimes, Erimem, your ability to point out the flaws in my otherwise perfect plans errs on the irritating.

RICHARD: Who's that?

PERI: What?

RICHARD: Him, on the screen, talking to Shakespeare. The one in black, all hunched over, with the pudding bowl haircut, with the long pointy false nose, and the pronounced limp, and the hump, and the warts. Oh no, it's not, is it?

PERI: Ah.

RICHARD: It is, isn't it. Right, that's it. I can take a joke as much as anyone, but this has gone too far. I've had enough!

DOCTOR: Richard, wait! (Tardis door opens) Oh no. One of these days I'm going to make that door control less conspicuous. As if things couldn't get any worse.

(Wibble noise.)

ROBOT: You are Doctor Who. Your contract has been violated.

PERI: They just got worse.

DOCTOR: Get out of here. I'll deal with him.

RICHARD: Right, this ends now. I can take the odd joke but now it's getting silly.

BURBAGE: Who on Earth is this... person? This some kind of joke? Are you with the Lord Admiral's Men?

SHAKESPEARE: Look, get off this stage or I'll use this.

RICHARD: Try me.

SHAKESPEARE: You asked for it.

(Feeble weapons fire runs out.)

SHAKESPEARE: Oh dear. Look, I know it's not very flattering, but haven't you heard of legitimate satire? You know, fair comment and all that? Pricking the pomposity of the great and the good? You should just laugh and pretend to be flattered really. That's what all the others do.

BURBAGE: Look, who is this?

SHAKESPEARE: Er, would you believe Richard the Third?

BURBAGE: What?

SHAKESPEARE: It's really not what it looks like.

BURBAGE: Oh, my God, you've recast! You hear of it done halfway through a run, not halfway through the play! Listen to me, you ham. I'm Richard the Third, so you can hop it, right now.

SHAKESPEARE: He is actually Richard the Third, you know.

RICHARD: I am Richard the Third.

BURBAGE: Look, I'm the Richard the Third here.

MAN: No, I'm Richard the Third.

MAN 2: No, I am.

WOMAN: I'm Richard the Third.

MAN 3: I'm Richard the Third and so's my wig.

(Audience cheers.)

RICHARD: Look, if you want to be Richard the Third, be my guest. I just want to borrow your sword and then I'll leave.

BURBAGE: My sword? Why'd you want to borrow my sword?

(Shakespeare then Richard run through, yelling.)

MAN: 'Ere, was that William Shakespeare being chased by a man with a big sword?

WOMAN: Yeah.

MAN: Everyone's a critic.

BURBAGE: And who the hell are you meant to be?

PERI: Er, we are two sisters who have engaged on a quest to track down our true loves. Er, both of whom, by way of coincidence, happen to be twin brothers. So we've dressed ourselves as boys to make our way in the world without awkward questions.

MAN: I seen that one last week.

(Audience boos.)

DOCTOR: Look, don't you realise that some books take time to write? There's research that needs to be done, tea that has to be drunk, baths to be had.

ROBOT: That is irrelevant. Twenty thousand words are due or your contract with existence will be revoked.

DOCTOR: Oh dear. Well, you can't revoke anything with a loose maintenance hatch, can you? Here, old chap, let me just (electric short) There, that's fixed it.

ROBOT: A clearly legible manuscript must be submitted (winds down)

DOCTOR: Or perhaps not. I'm always terribly careless when it comes to robots. Hmm. Let's have a look at your memory circuits, shall we? Ah. Thought you'd be in there. If I just do a little re-prioritising, someone will be in for a nasty shock.

PERI: We couldn't find Shakespeare or Richard.

ERIMEM: Sorry.

DOCTOR: Look, it's of vital importance we find both of them. Richard is a hundred years out of his own time and Shakespeare has one or two anachronistic knick-knacks of mine about his person.

PERI: You mean the ray gun?

DOCTOR: The gun, yes, and I'm afraid a Sontaran fragmentising grenade is also missing.

PERI: A Sonta-fragma-what?

DOCTOR: If he's taken it, one careless move and he could destroy half of London. It doesn't look like much, just a small white cylinder with an antennae poking out of the top. He probably doesn't know how dangerous it is.

ERIMEM: Doctor...

SHAKESPEARE: Well I do now.

PERI: Doctor!

SHAKESPEARE: Didn't think I'd double back, did ya? I know this city like the back of my hand. It wasn't hard to lose him.

DOCTOR: I'd let it go if I were you.

SHAKESPEARE: Careful, Doctor. Come any closer and I'll drop this thing.

DOCTOR: You'd hardly commit suicide, would you?

SHAKESPEARE: Ah, but you don't understand, Doctor. I don't care about what happens to me. My role as husband and father is all but over. My wife has turned shrewish, the illness took away my only child, Hamnet. The only role that I have left is that of simple player, and it's all thanks to her.

DOCTOR: Her?

SHAKESPEARE: Her support, her patronage. I owe it all to my Queen. I love her, and isn't that what a lover does, to shape the truth for his mistress, to give her immortality? This is how I can repay her, by removing the blemish from her royal lineage.

DOCTOR: I don't know how to say this, but it's really all for nothing, Billy. She's already immortal. In the history stakes, the Tudors come off much better than our friend Richard.

SHAKESPEARE: Nice try, Doctor. So you see, if we don't go back to get those wenches, I'm quite prepared to drop this thing. Let's just close these (Tardis doors close) so we don't eliminate London by accident. Now, we're going back to 1485.

ERIMEM: Doctor, he's hurting me.

PERI: Erimem, I'm not sure, but I think Shakespeare put a hand on your royal behind.

ERIMEM: Did he?

(Crack!)

SHAKESPEARE: Oh, me arm! Ow. You've broken me arm! My writing arm.

PERI: And I'll take the Cyber-gun, thank you.

(Wibbling sound.)

SHAKESPEARE: Oh, what's that noise?

PERI: Oh no. Here we go again.

ROBOT: You are William Shakespeare. The second draft of your manuscript *The Tempest* is approximately seven thousand one hundred and three years overdue for delivery. You are in violation of contract.

SHAKESPEARE: What the Chaucer is that thing?

ROBOT: You have transgressed your deadline. Your contract has been violated.

SHAKESPEARE: Get away from me! Leave me alone!

ROBOT: There must be no contract violation.

SHAKESPEARE: Get away from me! (Tardis door opens) Stop it, will ya? (runs out)

DOCTOR: Erimem, are you all right?

ERIMEM: I'm fine.

PERI: Doctor, he dropped this.

DOCTOR: Oh, good.

PERI: Is it safe?

DOCTOR: Of course it is. It's my electric toothbrush.

ERIMEM: What? It's a Sonta-frag-something.

DOCTOR: No, it's my toothbrush. I could see he'd doubled back on the scanner. I guessed if he thought he'd stolen a weapon he could use against us, he might come back in here and we could deal with him. Didn't quite work out like that. Sorry, Erimem.

ERIMEM: It's all right. Did you notice that the Tardis made a landing noise just then?

DOCTOR: Really? I hadn't set the Tardis in motion.

ERIMEM: Yes, it was just like when we arrived in the 15th century, when the Tardis jumped two years in the past.

DOCTOR: That's interesting. She's moved all by herself again.

PERI: Where to?

DOCTOR: To pre-set coordinates. I'd asked Richard where he wanted dropping off and he said something about fulfilling his destiny, so I said how about... Oh dear.

ERIMEM: What?

DOCTOR: I think William Shakespeare has just become an unwitting participant in the Battle of Bosworth.

(Clash of swords, lots of shouting.)

SOLDIER: Is that not the King, over there?

SOLDIER 2: Where?

SOLDIER: There. The one running like mad over that field over there, pursued by that huge knight. He shouts for help like a big girl.

SOLDIER 2: Nah, it can't be.

SOLDIER: Look, he's got a limp. Look at the way he carries his arm, how it's curled up. He's definitely got a withered arm.

SOLDIER 2: Oh yeah.

SOLDIER: Do you think that we should rally round him or something?

SOLDIER 2: Bit late, really. He's been surrounded by Hasting's troops and they're cutting him to pieces. Or at least they're trying to. Cor, he can't half climb.

SOLDIER: Oh well, so much for him.

SOLDIER 2: Still, let them record this day that Richard died fighting like a lion, and not blubbing like a big baby hiding up a tree.

SOLDIER: Yours is indeed a towering intellect.

DOCTOR: Oh dear.

ERIMEM: What?

DOCTOR: I see there's good news and bad news. The good news is the loss of the most accomplished playwright the world has ever known a hundred years before his birth seems to have confused the robot's deadline circuits, and he's blown himself to bits.

ERIMEM: And the bad news?

DOCTOR: Well, the clue was in the good news. We've lost the most accomplished playwright the world has ever known a hundred years before his birth.

ERIMEM: What was that you were saying about the Web of Time?

DOCTOR: Yes, this could be a bit awkward. Unless...

ERIMEM: Unless what?

DOCTOR: Well, remember the saying, the story changes but the ending stays the same? Perhaps that philosophy has its uses after all.

RICHARD: Oh, blast it.

DOCTOR: Your Majesty, how goes the creative flow?

RICHARD: Not too well. I keep spelling Shakespeare wrong.

DOCTOR: Oh, I wouldn't worry about that.

RICHARD: How much of this stuff do I have to do?

DOCTOR: You just have to knock off a few plays. Couple of historicals, handful of tragedies, a few comedies.

RICHARD: I don't do jokes.

DOCTOR: Perfect. You seem almost over-qualified for the job.

RICHARD: I went to the Kingmaker tavern, you know.

DOCTOR: Oh yes?

RICHARD: Amazed it's still there, really. The old place hasn't changed a bit. In fact, they haven't even cleared the coronation mugs off the shelves. Oh well, maybe next century.

DOCTOR: I'm sorry about Clarrie.

RICHARD: No, you're not. He's just a detail to you, a stray pen stroke in the ledger of history. Dead as he's meant to be, and Time didn't even have to blink. It's funny, ever since I was told it was my fate to murder my nephews, I was determined to fly in the face of destiny. Then, when I pulled those sheets back and found out

my nephews were nieces, that was it. I couldn't win. Time made me look like I'd done away with them all along. I couldn't do anything else. I suppose that's how Time works, doesn't it?

DOCTOR: Pretty much, yes. You can't escape it, but you can fool it sometimes.

RICHARD: I could have done it, you know. Given you a sword, shown you to their rooms and said, there's your timeline, Doctor. Fix it. But the way things have fallen into place, it made it very easy for you, didn't it? No hard decisions. You were lucky.

DOCTOR: I have a charmed existence. It has been noted by several angry assorted dictators and warlords.

RICHARD: You know the funniest thing about this? When I put them in the Tower no one cared. I needn't have bothered finding replacements. You know why no one saw them after 1484? Because no one bothered to look. So long as the turnip-munchers get their archery on a Saturday and the pub doesn't run out of ale, we could put a dead squirrel on the throne of England and they wouldn't give a damn. Nothing matters, really, not in the long run.

DOCTOR: That's a thought that seldom crosses my mind. Perhaps it should cross it more often. I find it strangely depressing and reassuring all at the same time.

RICHARD: When you're born into privilege like me, you look forward to becoming part of history. It's only now that I'm realising what that means.

DOCTOR: Well, now you have a second chance.

RICHARD: Unlike George. I'll miss him. He was a drunk, he was a coward, he was about as reliable as a dead horse, but he was my brother.

DOCTOR: Why not put him in your first Shakespearean play? Give him another bite of history. Give him the immortality that history can't.

RICHARD: That's not a bad idea. What am I meant to be writing?

DOCTOR: Let me see. It's 1597. Ah, you're just about to start Henry the Fourth, part one.

RICHARD: That all right? Can I put him in that one?

DOCTOR: Oh, I should think so. Well, goodbye. And don't forget, if you ever struggle a bit with the language, look up a chap called Francis Bacon. He'll be happy to give you a hand.

DOCTOR: Ah, the heady smell of the 16th century. No matter whenever I find myself, at heart I'm a renaissance man.

ERIMEM: Doctor?

DOCTOR: Erimem.

ERIMEM: I must speak to you.

DOCTOR: Oh, is there something on your mind?

ERIMEM: I need your advice. In order to keep a friendship, I have destroyed a friendship.

DOCTOR: In what way?

ERIMEM: I have lied to that friend. I told her something that she found disturbing. When I realised she couldn't take it in, I told her I was just joking.

DOCTOR: Well, a little white lie can't do any harm.

ERIMEM: How can a friendship be built on lies?

DOCTOR: The same way history can. Just look at what's happened here. If a King can become a playwright, and a playwright can die a King's death, surely a friendship can survive a small untruth. You're still friends at the end of it, aren't you?

ERIMEM: Yes.

DOCTOR: Well, there you go, then. The story changes, the ending stays the same.

PERI: Doctor, Erimem.

DOCTOR: Hello, your Majesties.

ERIMEM: Hello, Peri.

DOCTOR: Now, what did you three see this afternoon?

SUSAN: Henry the Sixth part two.

PERI: It wasn't as good as the first one. Didn't have many of the original actors in it, for one.

JUDITH: How's he doing in there?

PERI: Are you sure you're doing the right thing?

DOCTOR: Of course I'm sure. Well, I think I'm sure. I'm definite that I think I'm sure. It has a kind of historical balance, doesn't it? After all, Shakespeare took his place. I'm certain he'll be fine. Another fact not commonly known about Richard was that he was a very literate man.

(Door opens.)

JUDITH: Uncle, how's it going?

SUSAN: Whatever you do, don't write any sequels. They really drag.

(Door closes.)

ERIMEM: Doctor, what about the girls?

PERI: They can come with us, can't they?

DOCTOR: I'm not sure they're meant to. Shakespeare told us that illness took away his only child, Hamnet. It is true that his son died early in life, but it's not true that he was an only child. What history does say is that

Shakespeare had two daughters, Susanna and Judith. They both outlived him and had very rich, full lives.

PERI: Well, isn't that neat.

DOCTOR: I thought so. Everything explained and everything in its place.

ERIMEM: Not quite, Doctor. There is still the question of why we were thrown two years back in time.

PERI: Erimem's right, Doctor. If the Tardis does that again, there's no telling what trouble we'll end up in.

DOCTOR: I er, I get the feeling we won't be bothered by that particular problem again.

ERIMEM: How do you know?

PERI: Is there something you aren't telling us?

DOCTOR: Well, to put it simply, the telepathic circuits of the Tardis link themselves into a mind-brain interface of the pilot, and picked up an irregular pattern formed within the interface due to the deleterious effects of an external intoxicating influence, and the space-time circuits co-opted the pattern and used it as an operating template.

ERIMEM: You mean, when you were drunk you gave the Tardis hiccups.

DOCTOR: In a word, yes.

PERI: No more ginger pop for you.

DOCTOR: Yes, I had come to that conclusion myself. Anyway, into the Tardis you go. No time to waste.

ERIMEM: What's the rush?

DOCTOR: Well, look what we discovered. No one killed the Princes in the Tower and Shakespeare died at the Battle of Bosworth. There's no way I can put that in my Doctor Who Discovers Historical Mysteries book. I'll have to think of something else for my first chapter. How do you both feel about Jack the Ripper?